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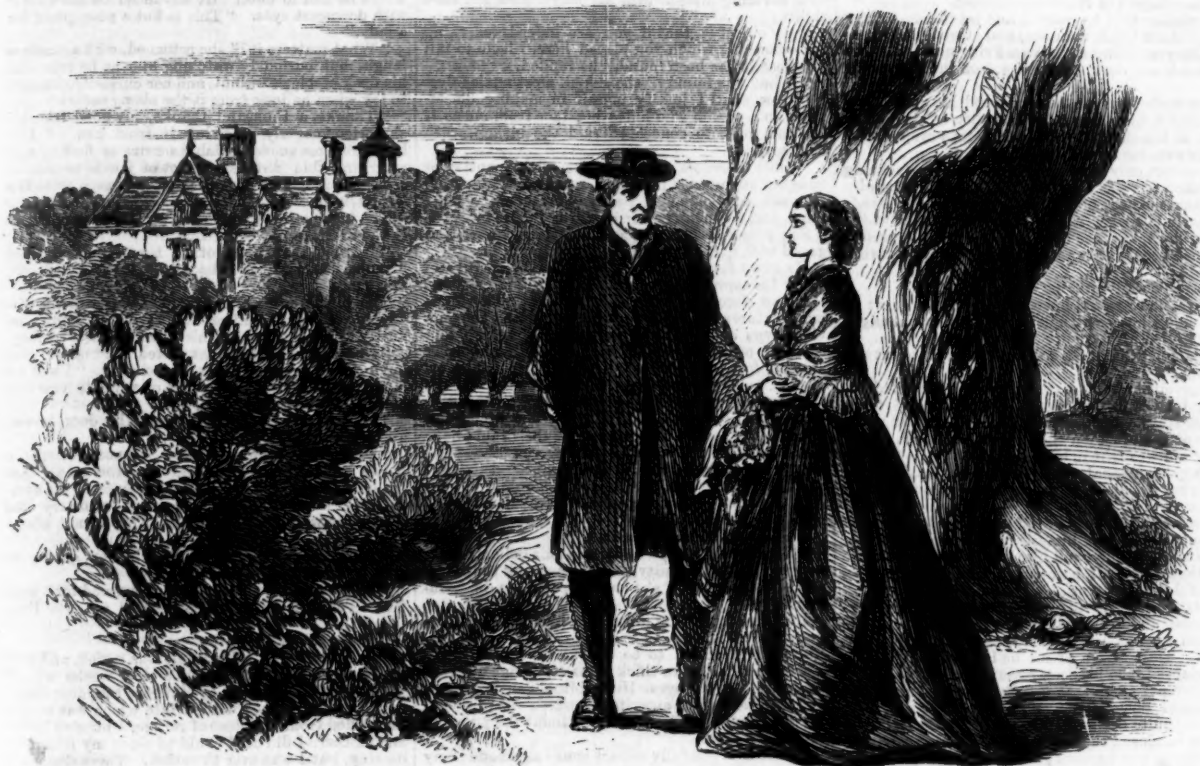
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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[READING A FACE.]

THE DIAMOND COLLAR.

CHAPTER I.

Nay, listen unto me—
I will speak frankly. I have never loved thee;
I cannot love thee. This is not my fault,
It is my destiny. Anon.

You would have thought it a wild enough scene, despite the broad brown fields on the face of the hill, and the tame round outline of that hill against the leaden sky, for the wind was holding a shrieking holiday after a dull autumn week, and every tree in the forest, down at the foot of the mountain, was shaking his russet branches recklessly.

Whew! How it howled past the bishop's palace, and down the empty road with a storm of dead leaves snapped off the shivering trees in its teeth. The moan of the sea down by Bishopstowe came, over two miles of the mountain, distinctly to the ears; the copper glare from the west struck a path of bronze-coloured glory deep into the shadows of the melancholy wood; and the old trees glowed in the lurid ray, and sighed in the gust like sobbing children.

But a moment ago the road was empty, save of whirling leaves—now a man appeared, coming from Bishopstowe, his head bent to the rough buffet of the wind; his hands clasped behind him, in serene meditation.

By his outward appearance you would see that he was an ecclesiastical dignitary—and judge him to be the bishop residing in yonder palace.

Slowly triling his way from the village beyond the mountain against the wind, this man stopped in the shadow of the wood, and lifted his eyes, for the wind in a sudden puff had snatched off his hat, and was rolling it on its venerable brim into the refuge of a calm ditch.

"Ah, I thought I had forgotten Mabel," said the bishop, placidly recovering his hat, and shaking from it the water, he turned his face towards Bishopstowe once more.

A moon among the distant tree-tops showed that the wind was back again, and he paused to let it pass, for he was weary.

Down it came into the valley, roaring, shrieking, nipping the hoary tops off the trees, and sending angry scouts into their recesses; waving the skirts of the bishop's coat like the sails of a foundering ship, and tossing the yellow leaves cloud-high in its mad merriment.

A mighty king of the forest stood before the bishop. His old arms creaked, and smaller branches moaned piteously, as a perfect hurricane of his own fallen leaves was flung up derisively into his bare bosom.

The bishop stood, with a half smile, to watch the sudden effect, as the eddying leaves danced round and round in fairy measure; and as new squadrons rushed into the dance, the heap on the roots of the oak grew ever the smaller, till the last ray of a swift burst of sunlight was gone; but something lay there still.

It glittered in the shaft of light; it looked like a tiny sunbeam which the cunning oak had stolen to keep his old feet warm through the winter nights. Strange! What was it that lay in that queer place? The bishop stepped forward, and lifted it from the niche between the roots.

A dainty ebony casket, carved and brass-bound, and a shield in pure gold on the lid, in which the sudden ray had mirrored its flashing face, till it had betrayed the hidden treasure.

"How very extraordinary!" said the bishop, looking up and down the neighbouring highway, and into the darkening recesses of the wood, where he saw nothing. "Some one must have placed it here. What an unsafe place for such a box as this! The first labourer who passed might have carried it off after this wild storm. It must have lain here some time among the leaves, for the look is speckled with rust."

He put it under his arm, and holding his broad hat on his head, crossed the road, and strode towards his own residence.

The palace of Bishop Thouvenal was an ancient, rambling mansion, with a steep, blue slate roof, red stacks of chimneys, a triple row of windows, and a deep stone portico, with a range of Greek colonnades on either side.

The grounds were severe in aspect, showing only the graver side of nature, even in her warmest seasons; the circular lawn in front of the palace was enclosed by an iron chain, which ran through low and massive stone pillars, guarding off man and beast, and dismally clanking in the wind, and rusting in the rain.

A tall flag-staff, with its supports, was all that occupied the centre of the enclosure.

For the rest, a damp, leaf-strewn walk led from the gate round the left side of the fading lawn, to the heavy double doors of the palace; and the walk was bounded by a low wire palisade, towards which the sombre trees of the forest crowded, as if eager to encroach upon the desolate grounds of the bishop.

"Here's a hurricane, my lord," said the footman, pressing the door shut against the wind, which sought to rush in after the bishop, as if loth to lose a victim.

Bishop Thouvenal turned into his library, a room on the left of the hall, and closed the door.

This room was bare enough and bleak enough, considering that it was the library and study of his lordship. It held nothing whatever that was not absolutely necessary.

There were plenty of vast folios in plain, glass-protected bookcases, and a great study table on which was nailed a black serge cover; and on which lay huge tomes, almost too heavy to lift; and there was among them a desk of black walnut, lying open, and scattered papers, and a plain glass inkstand.

The floor was of black oak, nicely polished; one straw mat lay before a leather study chair, and a small leather sofa faced the window, from which you saw across the lawn and the road into the heart of the forest, with the old oak, which had sheltered the casket, in the very front.

Here in this simple study it was said that the bishop spent all his time that was not spent at his holy duties; and there were plenty who called him a most wonderful scholar.

Bishop Thouvenal advanced briskly to the table, and placed the box upon it.



It was a strange windfall surely; and now that he examined it closely, there was a surprise awaiting him at each corner—a monogram in gold.

"Ah, Heavens!" ejaculated the bishop, with dilating eyes, "how unaccountable."

Immovably he stood there, staring at the ebony casket, until the shadowy phantoms of the distant trees began to climb into the room.

Then he tried the lock.

It was shattered, and broke open so suddenly that at once the contents lay before him, illuminating his face with a silvery reflection, as if the moon had been imprisoned in this fairy cabinet.

No wonder that he gasped, and let it drop among the old black letter volumes, and stared after it, as the glittering thing slid like a living chain of stars from book and desk, and dropped on the floor at his feet.

He crouched over it, he continued his speechless stare, and it sparkled up to him with fresh melting lights, as the shadows of the tree-tops crept down, and the evening waxed deeper.

It was not only surprise which was overwhelming the bishop; it was consternation—it was horror!

He snatched the object from the floor, and strode to the window with it, and as he held it up to the waning light, his face became white as if a plaster mask had been fitted on it; and he muttered between his teeth:

"Have you followed me here, then?"

A royal lady would have surveyed the object of the bishop's horror with delight. Rothschild might have emptied his treasury to possess it.

A Diamond Collar—a splendid triumph of art and preciousness.

Seven clusters of diamonds were connected together by Greek devices in brilliants, and three flashing stars depended from the throat; and in the corner of each festoon shone a golden shield, with a monogram wrought in brilliants.

Bishop Thouvenal sank down on the leather sofa, and laying the diamond collar on the pillow, covered his face with his hands.

He sat there almost breathless for a long while; only once he roused himself for a moment or two. It was to thrust his hand into his bosom, and to take from thence a small hair-guard from which hung a beautiful jewelled ring.

He examined this ring with a forlorn anxiety, turning it over and over again, and comparing the monogram on its inner side with those on the diamond collar. Then with a groan he hid it in his bosom and relapsed into his deep reverie.

For twenty years that jewelled ring had never left the neck of Bishop Thouvenal.

It was quite dark when he moved again.

Then he closed the shutters over the window, and, not without one nervous glance around, replaced the diamond collar in the rose velvet-lined ebony casket, and carefully locked it in his desk.

When had that desk been shut up before? You might judge if he had seen the rim of cobwebs which the lifted lid disclosed upon the black sergo, with the tiny spiders running frantically about the riven nets.

Back and forth he paced in his uncarpeted library, through the long hours of that night.

In times past Bishop Thouvenal had been a man of iron will and prompt action, but when the morning light broke through the chinks of the shutters, and he opened them wide to look at the dawn, his face was still anxious, fearful, irresolute.

That look rested upon it for several days.

Four days after that storm among the leaves, Bishop Thouvenal was standing at his library window, gazing across the lawn and road at the spot where he had found the ebony casket.

Quite suddenly he clasped his hands, a crimson flush covered his face. He went out of the house without a moment's delay, skirted the lawn for a few paces, sprang over the wire palisade among the trees, and made his way to a shadowy nook, where he could see across the road the great oak he had watched so long.

What had he waited for these four days?

CHAPTER II.

Francisco: I thank thee, Heaven, that thou hast heard my prayer.

And sent me this protector! Now be strong.

Be strong, my heart! I must dissemble here.

False friend or true?

Victoriano:

A true friend to the true!

Spanish Student.

A FEMALE was standing beneath the oak tree, with her back to the road, in an attitude of profound thought. The folds of her lustrous black garments were as motionless as if carved in jet. Whether young or old could not be guessed. She could have but one object in standing there; she was looking for the ebony casket.

Suddenly she sank down on her knees, and began to gather the dry leaves in handfuls from the gray roots of the oak.

No doubt remained on the bishop's mind. He

stepped from his concealment, crossed the road, and put his hand heavily upon her shoulder.

"What are you looking for?" he demanded, sternly.

She gasped as the hand fell on her person, and swept a lace veil over her face before she rose to her feet, waving him back with a strange nervousness as she did so.

"What is your object, my friend, in asking that?" she returned.

The accent was foreign, the tone refined; and the bishop gazed most eagerly at her, nodding his head as if assuring himself that his conjectures had been right.

"My object is, that if you are indeed searching for something which you placed here, I have to tell you that it has been found," he replied.

"What was found?" she asked, most anxiously.

"How shall I justify myself in making disclosures to a person who hides her face from me as if she had guilt to conceal?" said the bishop, with cold severity.

"Guilt to conceal!" echoed she, with a motion of haughty surprise. "Be silent, if you have no ground for such a belief. Can you read faces, sir? Read mine, and reconsider your insulting judgment."

She removed her veil, and also her bonnet, and gazed with quiet and lofty reproach upon him.

He saw a face of transparent pallor, beautiful and sad. Its expression was majestic in the extreme. Her eyes were most extraordinary in their deep blue; her features accorded perfectly with the noblest type of European beauty. A long, shining tress of pure flaxen hair rippled down on either side her face; the rest was clustered in a triple row of pale, golden rolls behind.

There was something indescribable, unexpected, perplexing, about this lady, which you would not see in other ladies, however noble their rank, however lovely their persons; it hovered about her every motion and her every look, and it set it apart and conspicuous, let her do as she would.

The bishop looked upon her speechlessly, and with open mouth.

No wonder if he was astonished.

To think that he had suspected this delicate creature of having a guilty secret was rank sacrilege, and she seemed as if she had expected his discomfiture.

But the expression upon the bishop's face was more violent than either astonishment or discomfiture. He seemed to be convulsed, as if by an electric shock. Two thick veins stood out upon his brow between the eyes. His habitual gentle sadness had vanished before an agitation which was frightful. He gazed upon the lady's face without the power to remove his gaze.

"I see that you fully retract your suspicions of my character," said she, with careless scorn, "and are ready to believe my next statement. I have come here to recover a box—an ebony casket—which was deposited at the foot of this tree, four days since, under circumstances of great danger to me."

She dropped her eyes under his immovable stare, and a slight frown on the pearly brow showed her displeasure.

"Come with me, madam," answered Bishop Thouvenal, in a strange voice. "I will restore the casket to you. I found it the day you put it here."

She glanced keenly at him, as his hurried, husky tones fell on her ear; but the bishop's face was turned from her, and he was already leading the way towards his palace.

If she had known the serene nature of Bishop Thouvenal, she would have been amazed at his excited tread; she did not, and she followed him fearlessly. She was light and swift of foot, but it was impossible to overtake her guide until he had reached the gate of his grounds. When there, she said, in a decisive manner:

"Sir, can I rely upon you not to be molested here? Without your promise I can go no further."

"You are quite safe with me," returned Bishop Thouvenal, in a voice that was humility itself.

Whereat, she entered the gate with an entire confidence, and walked by his side.

As they went up the leaf-strewn walk, she dropped her veil, and muffled her figure in the folds of her mantle. The bishop assisted her. It was noticeable that he arranged her mantle awry, whereas she had adjusted it in graceful draperies.

"Sir, what place is this?" she asked.

"The house of Jerome Thouvenal," he replied, his eyes on the ground.

"And you are Bishop Thouvenal?" cried she. "Ah! that is very well, indeed. I am glad to be thrown upon your mercy. They say that you are a very good man; and good men have compassionate hearts."

The bishop bowed silently.

"But I have a strange request to make," said the lady; "and it is that you will not bring me into the presence of any member of your family."

"Madam, you shall be as private as you wish. My servants shall not see your face unless you

choose. Madam, I have no family to keep in ignorance of this visit."

A footman opened the door to admit them, and seeing a lady at his master's side, gazed at her in profound surprise.

Like a man in a dream the bishop conducted her into his library, looking back once, and with a nervous frown at the footman, who would have hurried on to open the door for them.

"Take this—this seat," faltered he, seeming for the first time to notice with surprise and distress how very shabby and poor the study chair was which he had to offer. He advanced to his visitor with downcast eyes. "This is but a poor place for a lady."

"What matters it?" she returned, with a careless laugh, but curiously watching him as he unlocked his desk of black walnut, and her curiosity changed to joy when he took from it the ebony casket.

"Thanks, a thousand thanks, my good friend," she cried, eagerly receiving it from him. "You have done me an incalculable service in finding and returning this ill-fated casket of jewels to me. I see the lock has given way; you have seen what lies within, then?"

The bishop bowed with an air that was gloomy in the extreme.

"I trust that none other than you, my lord bishop, has seen the diamonds," she remarked, anxiously.

The bishop related the circumstances of his discovery, and she thanked him more and more earnestly as she understood his prudence and secrecy.

"In return for such unexpected kindness as you have shown me," said she, graciously, "I will relate such of the circumstances of my late years as shall be interesting to you."

The bishop, still standing near the door, bowed and looked deeply expectant.

"I have fled from my family because—" here the lady's wonderful eyes appealed to the harsh face before her with an intuitive assurance of its sympathy—"because I was ordered to marry one whom my whole soul loathed. You do not blame me in that, sir?"

"No, madam," murmured the bishop, gazing at her with exceeding wonder.

"I have been hiding myself in England for a long time—you will have noticed that I am not English?"

"Yes, madam."

"I thought that all pursuit was ended, and that my danger was over; but a few weeks ago, I saw myself surrounded by dangers the most imminent, and threatened with a fate which was revolting. I fled from my place of refuge, I hurried hither and thither. I did all I could to elude my miserable destiny, but I was ever thwarted. These diamonds—my lord, they have been my curse, they are the glittering spoil that attracts the pursuer from afar. Wherever I went, the diamond collar guided my enemies by its fatal brilliance—until I have longed to toss it into the sea, to thrust it into the earth—anything that I might rid myself of it. A week ago I learned through the indomitable cleverness of my maid, that spies had tracked me down, and that I was about to be recaptured. I instantly drove off from the wretched retreat where I believed myself hidden, and for two days (my lord, think of it), we travelled incessantly—hoping to throw my enemies off the scent. In vain; closer and closer they came and closer, guided by the description of this casket, which we were forced to carry, uncovered, having no other luggage. During the night we drove through this place, and we heard the sounds of these pursuers all the way behind us. My woman, a good faithful soul, my lord bishop, told me what we would do. We changed dresses, she wore the rings the scented cambric and the silk of madam, and I wore the stuff of the woman; and then we passed through these great woods, where the withered leaves lay ankle deep. My lord, I never thought a woman in her senses would do what I did, but urged by frantic terror I marked out that old oak tree opposite this great house, and threw the casket at its feet."

"Hard pressed, we reached the village ten miles distant, and took rooms at the inn there; and the men demanded an interview with madam. My woman met them and they were deceived; they searched for the diamonds, and finding nothing were furious. They believed they had followed the wrong carriage, and that those they sought had eluded them. They then left us in peace; and for four days we did not venture to leave the village, fearing spies on our actions. To-day we drove through, and I left the carriage standing in an old grassy bye-lane while I searched for the casket, which I dare not lose sight of. Thank Heaven, you have rescued them from being discovered by a less discreet person; for which once more, receive my thanks."

Disappointment and perplexity struggled for the mastery in the bishop's face; he seemed to wait for some further confidence from his visitor, and when she vouchsafed none, he gazed most anxiously at her

"My position is one of extraordinary difficulty," resumed she wearily, "at times I am tempted to end my perils by death. There seems to be no place on the earth for such as I. Have I your sympathy, my lord bishop?"

Again her bright and fathomless eye appealed to him with a confidence that was resistless.

Bishop Thourvenal bowed with deep humility. "I cannot tell you more of my history," she said, "but it is an innocent one, and most unfortunate."

"Most wild and dangerous—most unprecedented!" ejaculated the bishop, with abrupt force.

She looked at him with a piercing scrutiny. The man before her was a tall, muscular and powerful looking man of fifty. His face was dark, rugged, and almost harsh; his eyes were deep-set, and most piercingly bright.

Still those eyes belied the severe promise of the face, for they were gentle, kind as a woman's—simple as a child's.

An air of habitual sadness softened his countenance—he was one of those bishops of whom men say—"He is a father of everybody."

Bishop Thourvenal had a constrained and lonely air, his goodnesses were done in secret; he affected a certain sternness which deceived no one; and his mighty frame enforced a respect which he was perpetually deprecating.

In spite of his agitations, his constraints, his awkwardnesses, the lady seemed to regard him with perfect faith. She rose, moved by a sudden impulse, and placed the ebony casket in his hands.

"Sir," she said, simply, "I am less afraid of you than of any one. I believe that you are worthy of my trust. Will you keep this casket of diamonds until I may safely claim it again?"

The bishop started, and gazed down at her with darkening eyes; his hands, as they held the casket, trembled.

"Madam, what do you propose to do with yourself?" he asked.

She shrugged her shoulders somewhat mockingly, then smiled.

It was entrancing to see the fairy-like change which this slight smile wrought on the melancholy face.

"I think I must go and lose myself," she said, indifferently.

"Have you considered this step seriously, madam?" asked the bishop.

"Indeed I have considered nothing seriously except my danger in England," said the lady, shrugging her shoulders; "but I would rather be a serf in Siberia, than be forced back into the life which I have escaped. I have done a strange thing, perhaps a mad thing, in breaking free from my apportioned destiny; but I am willing to take the bitterest consequences rather than to go back to what I have escaped. I am not afraid of work, I am of heartless slavery. If you will take charge of these jewels for a few weeks until I am ready to leave England, you will indeed do me a service which I can never repay except with my life's gratitude. There will be no danger, my lord, for you. I can assure you of that."

Bishop Thourvenal, listening with his eyes on the floor, smiled a slight and gloomy smile.

"Give me twenty-four hours to think of it, madam," he demanded.

"Twenty-four hours," she echoed. "My friend, I had rather you had asked for the seventh diamond."

"Madam, you must give me the night," he cried, with passionate earnestness; "how can a man come to a decision immediately, in such extraordinary circumstances. Where can I hide this diamond collar? I must think of it. Give me the night."

"Very good, my lord, you shall have the night," said the lady, with a wave of the hand.

She did not seem in the least abashed by his manner, which was almost fierce, but a little surprised, as if for the first time she heard herself contradicted.

"I shall see you to-morrow, madam," said the bishop.

"Yes, my lord; shall I come here?"

"Better not, perhaps. You will stay the night at Bishopstowe?"

"Yes, at the inn."

"I shall go there. I am in the village every day, and it will not be remarkable if I visit you. I visit all."

"So I have heard. You are a good bishop. I am glad that I have fallen into your hands. You will be my friend, will you not?"

For an instant the bishop was too agitated to speak, but he composed himself soon, and replied: "Madam, I will serve you according to my power."

The lady raised her beautiful eyes to his; she seemed to love to reassure herself by long looks at the stern-looking man—his harsh face was pleasant to her.

"I thank you for all your kindness," she said.

rising and offering her hand with a charmingly frank smile; "and, for the present, adieu."

The bishop took her hand, but he scarcely appeared to know what to do with it.

At this moment his constraint and agitation were excessive. He looked on the floor, he stammered and trembled.

At last he found out what to do with it; he raised it to his lips and kissed it.

The lady looked oddly for a minute, but quickly rallied and turned to the door.

So he accompanied her, bare-headed, to the gate, and watched her walking away through the wavering shadows and russet leaves to the end of the lane, where her carriage awaited her.

Then the bishop went back to his library.

The light which her presence had brought to his eyes instantly faded away; a deep reverie overtook him in the act of locking the casket in his desk, and enchaind him, motionless as the enchanted sleeper, to the spot.

He had asked for the night to consider his visitor's request, and he began immediately.

He began by telling himself that he had arrived at a crisis of his existence which might ruin him.

Then he fathomed the destruction which might befall him, and the ignominy, and the shame, should he listen to the dictates of his heart.

This man had a history which was trembling behind the doors of discovery.

He was in a stupor when he thought of it, and a blank wall rose up before his will.

At first he felt too petrified to grasp anything but misery, and his mind wandered in a chaos.

But, little by little, the main points of his position pierced his benumbed comprehension.

Hours passed thus, during which the house became quiet as the grave; the bishop alone remained conscious, in a rapt convulsion.

At last it subsided; he sat up.

One long opal ray from a midnight star poured into his eyes—it recalled to him a power behind that brilliant firmament.

He trembled, and fell upon his knees.

Long past midnight the bishop lighted himself to bed. Seen by the glare of his lamp, his rugged face would have been called grand, celestial, in its ineffable peace.

He sank upon his pillow and slumbered like a child.

CHAPTER III.

I have heard all. And yet, speak on, speak on! Let me but hear thy voice, and I am happy!

For every tone, like some sweet incantation, Calls up the buried past to plead for me.

Speak—speak into my heart

Whatever fills and agitates thee own. Longfellow.

I THINK Geraldine Tyrrol was the sweetest creature that ever danced upon the earth.

Her little round face was always dimpled with smiles, rosy with health, and flashing with merriment. It was voluptuous as an antique mask, that sparkling little face.

And then her hair! Never in orderly array, never smooth and fashionably ugly, but always in distracting beauty waves.

And I assure you, you might safely love the darling, for she was as kind and good a soul as ever breathed. There was not one particle of guile in all her nature. No, indeed. The heir of the family had long ago absorbed all that.

Look at them together, and you would see it at once.

The brother and sister were dashing across the fields in full career after a long brown fox, for whose "brush" they were ambitious.

They had far outstripped the squires and the men in scarlet (Geraldine was a first-rate hunter), and were scrambling up an old grassy lane which wound over the face of the hill, their horses mad with ambition to be up with the yelling dogs, when the Honourable Geraldine Tyrrol snatched off her black velvet hat with the scarlet feathers, and waving it wildly, screamed:

"They've run him down, Peregrine—the brush for me!"

And she darted off the old road into the midst of the furze and the bog and the baying hounds.

"Keep back!" roared the Honourable Peregrine.

"You'll do yourself a mischief! Wait till the men come up; now he's brought to cover, and you shall have the brush—you've won it fairly."

And shocked enough are the Ladies Fitz Johns and De Ros at my conduct, I daresay," laughed the sprite, whose teeth and eyes were flashing like diamonds with the delight of her adventure. "Look down there, Perry!"

Her brother, a not very young, heavy-featured sportsman, with handsome eyes and arrogant nose, looked down as requested into the next field, where half-a-dozen equestrianes in blue habits were gently fling through the gap in the hurdles which had been made for them; and having looked, rode back across the grassy road and picked up something

white from a hazel bush, which he brought back fluttering like a pennon on the end of his whip, just as the other men dashed to the finish.

"Miss Tyrrol has it!" shouted the sportsmen, admiringly.

"What's that, Tyrrol?" demanded one; "a truce? Doesn't Miss Tyrrol want Reynard's brush? Does she beg for his life?"

"Dear, no. It's her handkerchief she dropped. Here, Gerry."

"Not mine," said Miss Tyrrol, glancing at it. "These are not Geraldine Tyrrol's initials."

"Nor anybody else's on the field," returned Mr. Tyrrol, examining them closely. "So I bequeath the bit of cambric which 'F. C. G. G. H.' hung on yonder hazel bough to my pocket until such time as I make the lady's acquaintance."

And he did so.

Nothing could look more bewitching than Geraldine Tyrrol as everybody surrounded her with gay congratulations; her arch face was aglow with triumph, her rosy lips babbled sweet enchantment, her unbound locks danced over the trim little body of green cloth in a manner that beggars description.

And the trim little body, which was decorated with rows and rows of silver buttons, turned and twisted on the tall, lean sore hunter as only such a charming little body could, until, on a great cavalier kneeling and presenting her with the brush, she blushed like a Venus in cornelian, and whispered to herself:

"Oh, Heaven! what shall I do with delight? Here's Lord Edgar Berney on his knees at last."

"To our lovely Queen of the Field," said Lord Edgar, gaily.

And everybody (among the men) cheered her, and Lord Edgar, who was as knightly as Sir Galahad, stared up at her stary eyes thoughtfully, twisting his great golden moustache.

Then the men whistled in their dogs, and the hunters and huntresses made a scattered rush down the grassy road.

"My dear Miss Tyrrol," drawled Lady Eleanor De Ros, getting hold of her, "we are all amazed at your seat. You jumped that five-barred gate and rode up the broken hillside just like a man. How could you?"

Bright-eyes looked demurely at Eleanor. She and her three sisters vied with each other in their endeavours to improve the manners of the unkempt Gerry.

"I'm sorry the chase is over," she said, with a little sigh. "It was delightful."

Lady Eleanor sighed too, and in a way that was not flattering to Miss Gerry.

"I could wish that you were more dignified, my dear," she said. "I heard Viscount Grantham speaking about you to Edgar Berney."

"What did he say?" cried Geraldine, with a flash of the great brown eyes.

"He said that you were a sad madcap—the greatest romp in the field, I think it was."

"And what did Lord Edgar say?"

Lady Eleanor had no mind to flatter naughty Gerry, so she pursed up her lips and was silent.

"Because I should like them both to know, and everybody to know—"

Here the angry little speech was cut short by the appearance of the knight of the golden hair at her elbow.

"And everybody to know," repeated he, provokingly.

"That I'm going to be the greatest romp in England—if I please!" cried Geraldine, with tears in her eyes, through which she saw a tremendous vision of my lord with the yellow hair and heart-breaking blue eyes and majestic figure, and saw that he was smiling, cruel man! "and that I think Viscount Grantham a good-for-nothing old gossip for saying any such thing."

"What then is Edgar Berney for replying—what he did?"

The little lady snatched away her eyes from his, and looked with indiscriminating severity at a poor old sparrow who was perched on a branch.

"I see that Viscount Grantham is looking for some one," observed Lady Eleanor De Ros, in a significant tone.

"Oh, I must race every step home!" cried Gerry, looking at her flashing little hunting watch. "Dear, dear! how angry pa'll be to wait dinner! Where's Perry, I wonder?"

"Yonder he is with my sisters," said Lady Eleanor. "You need not wait for him, I suppose, as long as the viscount is on the field. He can escort you home this evening, as he has often done before."

"I won't have Viscount Grantham!" cried poor Gerry, with a high flush. "Please, Lord Edgar, get my brother."

So the knight of beauty rode off, and, when he returned, Mr. Tyrrol was by his side.

"We're seven miles from Bellevue, Perry, and it's almost six o'clock. Are you coming?" said Gerry.

"All right. Good evening, Lady Eleanor. By-bye, Berney. Come, Gerry, we'll have a smart trot." By this time Viscount Grantham had sighted the scarlet fez, and his gray cob was shaping a course that way.

Miss Tyrrol struck a silver spur into her hunter, and was off like a flash.

Her golden-haired knight remained chatting with discreet Lady Eleanor, until Viscount Grantham, middle-aged, grizzly mustached, and jolly, rode up. When resigning the earl's daughter into the care of the new-comer, he dashed after the Tyrrols, leaving my lord and my lady staring at each other in discomfited silence.

As the brother and sister slackened speed after a couple of miles' hard trot, Geraldine's inward tumult burst forth.

"How I hate and detest 'old Grantham!'" she cried, almost weeping.

"Why 'old Grantham?' Why not 'young Grantham?' Don't you know, my dear Gerry, that it's a Christian duty to call one's own geese, swans?" demanded Perry, placidly. "He's not much over forty, and he's your intended husband; and, my dear girl, when you are the viscountess, you'll thank no one for calling him 'Old Grantham!'"

"Why does he call me names—to Edgar Berney then?" whispered poor Gerry.

"You silly, silly girl! What do you care for Berney. And if you did, what of it? Who would mind you? You're as good as married to Grantham, so let that be enough for you. Why, Geraldine, you're not going to be reticent, are you?"

Miss Tyrrol eyed her horse's ears pensively, and then the clatter of horses' hoofs came behind them, and a flush of joy warmed her cheeks, for, oh, happy, happy earth, here comes the knight of beauty!

He appeared by the lady's side, demurely apologising for the intrusion.

They rode on gaily; and about half-a-mile from the bishop's palace they met a carriage; the cover was thrown back, and a lady and her maid sat within.

The lady, who was leaning wearily among the cushions of the travelling carriage, was gazing up at the evening sky and the floating vapoury forms in such deep abstraction that she was not aware of the approach of the equestrians until touched by her maid.

Then indeed she sat up, and swept a heavy lace veil over her face; but not until one of the three riders had gazed fully into that face, and remarked all its peerless attractions.

"By Jove, Gerry, did you see that woman?" cried Peregrine, excitedly.

"I wasn't looking very closely," admitted Gerry. "Did you think her beautiful, sir?" appealing to Lord Edgar.

"Not her, for I wasn't looking at her," murmured Lord Edgar.

"Beautiful! I should think so," cried Mr. Tyrrol, with great enthusiasm. "I never saw such a royal-looking creature in my life. Who, in Heaven's name is she? Been visiting the bishop, I daresay."

And just then they galloped by the melancholy gray palace, with its triple rows of lonely-looking windows, from whence never a young face looked, and its dreary lawn and bare flagstaff.

But there were no marks of carriage-wheels going up the damp drive.

"Here's a chance for adventure which shouldn't be neglected. Who knows that the future Honourable Mrs. Peregrine reclines not in yonder carriage!"

"Good! you're not so witty as you seem to think, Berney," retorted Tyrrol. "I don't know what they have abroad, but I never saw such a handsome woman."

"What!" cried Berney, with a glowing glance into the charming brown eyes beside him. "In the name of all that's fascinating, make an exception of Bellevue."

"Of Bellevue either," said Perry. "Who'd look at a dog-rose alongside a jacqueminot?"

"You slanderous varlet," laughed Berney, "must I vindicate perfection's claim to the palm against her own brother?"

Tyrrol glanced sourly at the pair.

He was a dutiful enough son to remember how angry Sir Maurice Tyrrol, his father, would be, could he see this great fellow, Berney, dangling at Geraldine's side instead of the Right Honourable Viscount Grantham, her wealthy betrothed, and to be angry at her himself in consequence.

So he rode on the shadowy road before him cudgelling his brains for something to do in the emergency, and meanwhile he sulked.

What cared our happy little girl just then for the frowns of adverse fortune.

Wasn't her blonde-haired "men" king looking down into her eyes with a half-wondering, half-tender question in his own?

Wasn't he saying, in language no mortal ear could hear:

"What sort of a little creature are you, I wonder? You must be nice, for you are very, very pretty."

And wasn't her little heart crying so hard that she was trembling lest she should hear it:

"Love me, love me, love me, Edgar Berney, for indeed I would love you well?" Poor little Gerry!

CHAPTER IV.

'Tis very dangerous; and when thou art gone I'll chide myself for letting thee come here Thus stealthily by night. Where hast thou been? Since yesterday I have no news of thee.

Spanish Student.

BISHOP THOUVENAL was early on his road to Bishopstowe next morning.

Before setting out he had asked Mrs. Bonhill, his housekeeper:

"Would you like me to send a tradesman down to-day to look at the house? I think it's a little out of repair."

At which Bonhill was as confounded as if he announced that he was going to be married.

The bishop hastily walked away without even waiting for an answer to his question, and left her speechless.

Nothing could be more serene than Bishop Thouvenal's face as he walked in the deep forest shades alone.

Beyond a slight rigidity of the muscles, no trace remained of that mysterious agony of which I have told you.

There lingered, however, a faint reflection of the celestial peace which, at the close of the conflict, had ennobled these severe features.

Bishopstowe was a closely-built village upon the coast. The men were mostly fishermen; the women sewed gloves for the great glove factory which was owned by Sir Maurice Tyrrol. The boom of the waves was ceaseless upon the sand bar, and the clank of the iron machinery sounded all day long in an endless call to work.

The village swarmed with factory girls. The men were rough and hardy—they were seldom seen except on Sundays.

As Bishop Thouvenal threaded the narrow, stony streets of Bishopstowe he scarcely saw one adult, all being at work in the factory; but a few old granddames were trying to keep in order innumerable hordes of children.

These children crowded and rejoiced as the bishop passed by, and the granddames looked after him with softened eyes. They loved him.

The bishop entered the inn, and the landlady bustled forward to give his reverence a suitable reception.

"Dear, dear! but this is an honour, your lordship, that I wish you'd put upon the Dragon oftener. Nan, a chair for his reverence."

"Not to-day, Mrs. Merrivale," said the bishop, mildly; "I have come to see a stranger who is here."

The landlady's mouth and eyes opened.

"A lady, your reverence," she half whispered; "and the queerest one—"

The landlady was interrupted by the entrance of a young woman, who looked at the bishop attentively.

"Are you Bishop Thouvenal?" she asked in such indifferent English that insular ears were shocked. Bishop Thouvenal bowed.

"Your lordship is expected," she said, promptly—"follow me."

She conducted him to a parlour which the Dragon assigned to travellers "as didn't wish to mingle," and here sat the lady he wished to see.

Bishop Thouvenal had been quite calm as he walked the valley road and over Bramly Hill—he thought he would not be agitated again, however lowly was the sphere in which he found this lady, but indeed he was mistaken.

As she rose from the dingy chintz sofa, and stood on the poor drugged-covered floor in that common inn parlour, greeting him with such gracious kindness, he was smitten dumb.

He stood near the door, trembling; he gazed upon her with extraordinary emotion. The lofty beauty which her plain garments had half disguised the day before, was unobscured now, and flashed upon him with the brilliance of one of her own diamonds.

And yet her attire was only notable in its distinguished simplicity.

Her dress of dark blue cloth was outsquare upon the bosom, and buttoned with small black flagree buttons. A fold of lace illusion filled the front, and rose in a transparent billow round the throat, which was firm and rounded as that of a Juno.

Her stature was not above the usual height of well-proportioned women, but the peculiar richness, yet light and supple grace of the figure, gave her a most commanding mien.

Her white skin and pure blonde hair acquired loveliness from the imperial flash of her large blue

eyes, and the firm and perfect tournure of her every feature.

The bishop stood rooted before her, a hand clenched at each side, and speechless.

His eyes were cast down, his face was covered with distress, with confusion; he seemed the picture of a man confounded.

The lady watched him narrowly, and her countenance, so inexpressibly bright before, became sadly overcast; she turned away with tears in her eyes.

"Ah, I see," she said, coldly, "you have come to refuse my request, lord bishop."

These tears restored the bishop like a galvanic shock.

"Madam," he said, with a profound obeisance, "pardon my silence, which has misled you. I have no excuse for it. I am a stupid man. Madam, overlook my stupidity. I wish to serve you."

"Thanks, my good friend," she said, with a gracious smile. "You see that I am too hasty to do you justice. Forget my suspicions of your kindness, and be seated."

She waved her hand towards a chair, and the bishop, quite perturbed, refused it.

"If you will excuse my haste, I will at once make my proposal to you—to madam," he faltered.

The lady stared, and her maid grew blood-red.

"Madam, I am an eccentric man, my people say," said the bishop, in a low voice; "and one of my eccentricities is that I will not sit in your presence. Be pleased to listen to what I have to say."

"Very good, my lord; I am attentive."

"Madam, I will take charge of your jewels; I will also take charge of you. Will you honour me by accepting a shelter in my house until such time as you wish to leave it?"

The lady gazed incredulously in his face, then appealed to her maid in a foreign tongue.

"What do you think he means? To trap us? Impossible, with such a benignant eye."

Bishop Thouvenal understood her perfectly, but he made no sign that he did. He waited anxiously for her reply.

"Sir, I am astonished beyond expression at such a proposal," she said. "How is it that you are willing to mix yourself up in the unhappy affairs of one who is a stranger to you? You cannot be satisfied with the meagre explanations of my position which I have thought it safe to give you? Why, my lord, you have not even heard my name."

"I am quite satisfied," said he, most earnestly; "and I beg that you will trust in my desire to be of service according to my poor ability. Think no more of me, but consult your own convenience."

"Oh! my lord bishop, I have no words to thank you with. My heart is grateful, Heaven knows. I accept your generosity with confidence. Gretchen, do you hear? this man is my benefactor. Thank him, Gretchen."

Down went the maid on her knees at the bishop's feet, and kissed his hand.

It was a kind hand; it rested with a blessing on her head.

"He is a good man, that," murmured Gretchen, in German, to her mistress.

"An angel," said the lady.

When Bishop Thouvenal left the inn, instead of going his usual round among the poor people, he walked up and down beneath the cliffs, upon the shingly beach, for hours.

The bishop was looking back upon the vision of a man whom he had known—a wretched, sin-stained criminal; and, for the first time in twenty years, he saw that vision without a throe of mental agony.

"Thou bringest good out of evil!" murmured the bishop, looking upward.

The wild boom of the breakers came from the sand-bar, hollow echoes sounded from the cliff; but above the voices of Nature, something sweet and soothing answered in his heart.

And yet he was the possessor of a startling secret—the depository of a momentary mystery.

(To be continued.)

A HOUSE BUILT BY ONE MAN.—About four years ago an eccentric personage, who follows the pursuit of bird-catching, purchased a small plot of land on the eastern side of Nunhead Cemetery. Here he resolved to build a good-sized six-roomed brick house with his own hands. He at once set to work, and, strange to say, has nearly finished his task. He has been his own architect, his own bricklayer, his own labourer, his own joiner, his own plumber and glazier, and what is still more strange, has built the house without one particle of scaffolding, and even carried his own bricks from the maker by the armful as he was able to afford them. The work is said to appear very substantial, and to do him great credit. During the operations he has been living in a small brick hut, built by himself on the plot at the outset, in company with a little son and a loquacious parrot. He probably thought himself a second Crusoe on an uninhabited island, and behaved as such.



[MAN OF WAR AND MERCHANTMAN.]

LADY JULIETTE'S SECRET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Grand Court," "The Rose of Kendale," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

A look of calm resolve was in her eyes; Oh! was she dumbly mock or sternly wise? Did she foresee a future stained with crime, A blood-red battle and a fearful time? Or, rapt in pure religious ecstasy, Say, would she nobly live or bravely die?

Maxwell Fox.

LADY JULIETTE had always received a certain amount of kindness and politeness from her guardian. She did not "love his silver hair and his gentle voice;" still she had always received kindness from him, she looked up to him, and respected him, although there was no especial merit in him which called forth warm affection. She could hardly say why. A very fine man, a princely-looking personage, was Colonel Philbertson. He was handsome, with a brow lofty, if not broad; the eyes were bright and prominent as those of a hawk; the nose was Roman; the complexion of a handsome browned tint—it was the head of a warrior after the antique, carved in bronze. There was a certain firm setting about the lines of the mouth, however, on this occasion, which Juliette had never noticed before; there was something in the expression which startled her a little.

"Sit there, Lady Juliette," said the colonel, drawing a chair close to the one which he occupied. "Now, my dear, I am going to talk seriously to you."

Juliette met the piercing glance of her guardian with that steadfast clear look which made her eyes so wonderfully pure and starlike in their calm blue depths.

"Well, colonel," she replied, softly. Juliette always addressed her guardian as "colonel," she had done so from her childhood.

"Juliette, my dear, you have heard a great deal about your late father's will," said the colonel; "but I have hitherto thought you too young to enter into full particulars, but now it is time."

Juliette bowed her head gently.

"You know that the late earl had led a life of wild and reckless extravagance; his estates were mortgaged to the last fraction of their value—fine estates in Cumberland and Cornwall, northern and western England. There were the title-deeds of these estates, however, and a hundred thousand pounds' worth of property in gold, precious stones,

and jewels. That was meant for you, independent of the lost estates, but the box was stolen abroad, and it has never been heard of since."

"I have known all that sad history for a long time, colonel," replied Juliette gravely.

"Well, my dear, there was about one hundred a-year in the funds, which descended to you from your mother, who did not survive your birth six months. This was all that you had to depend upon for your subsistence. But I"—here the colonel laid a stress upon the personal pronoun—"I was a friend of your father's, and I was appointed guardian of the little trust. I hope I have acquitted myself well. I was obliged to go to India to join my regiment, but you remained with my wife and my wife's mother. You had nurses, governesses, and when you grew older, masters. You lived sometimes in London, sometimes in France, sometimes in Rome, always tenderly nurtured, until the time came that my brother died, and we took up our residence here at the Abbey. I came home from India to find the infant girl a beautiful little maiden of some twelve summers—now you are nearly eighteen. Have you not always been happy, Juliette?"

"Yes, colonel," replied the titled beauty; "but tonight I suddenly remembered something. I must have been three years old. I was travelling in a carriage through a mountainous country, where the days were hot and the nights were cold. I journeyed on in company with a tall dark-bearded man, whom I am convinced was my father. We stopped at an inn; there I was fed, and placed on a sofa to sleep. When I awakened, strangers were sitting round the table, talking with my father. One was Mr. Mapleton, who dined with us to-day!"

The colonel's bronzed face seemed to turn to marble when Juliette spoke thus; she perceived it; and then she went on rapidly with the history of her recollections—how that she heard her father say, "I shall never see my child again;" how that she was carried out to the stone terrace and heard the dull plashing of the water in the sombre lake, and saw the mountain shadows against the sky. Then she related how that she slept and awakened again to find herself in a carriage with strangers—who they were she could not say.

"But never again from that day to this have I seen the man who was my father," continued Juliette.

"Tell me, dear colonel, what all this mystery means. Who was my father, with his black beard? Where is he? Tell me."

She asked the question in her clear, soft, truthful voice.

The colonel shaded his hawk's eyes with his hand before he answered.

"You have had a dream, Juliette," he said, hoarsely. "You must not give way to these fancies. What would my poor friend Mapleton say if he knew that you were investing him with the attributes of a brigand? Ha, ha, ha!" and the colonel tried to laugh. "I hope—nay, I must insist—that you will not repeat this wild tale to any one else. Promise me."

"I promise you, since it seems to distress you," replied Juliette, frankly; "but now, colonel, tell me what you have to say to me."

"Oh," said the colonel, removing his hands from before his eyes and looking at Juliette like one who has just awakened from an unpleasant dream. "It was about your marriage I wished to speak. You know, Juliette, that although you are quite poor, having hardly enough property to provide you with food and clothes—certainly not enough to dress you as an earl's daughter should be arrayed—still that the richest, noblest blood runs in your veins. Your father, foreseeing this, provided a husband for you while he lay dying, a gentleman who is the richest merchant prince in England. He did not like to leave his beautiful child as a prize to be contended for in the marriage market. Your fate was settled while you yet lay in your cradle, Juliette."

Juliette bowed her head.

"And now," continued the colonel, "I find Sir Guildford grows impatient. He has long desired to ally himself with your noble house. Had he possessed a son twenty-five years younger than himself, then he would right gladly have affianced you to him; but his son was drowned. He is a childless widower, not so very old—not much over fifty—and you will find him generous, devoted, chivalrous. He will arrive to-morrow. Are you willing that the marriage shall take place this autumn—say, in September?"

"I must see Sir Guildford first," replied Lady Juliette.

"Oh, very well; but remember, Juliette, it is imperative that this marriage takes place."

Here the colonel struck the table with his open palm to give emphasis to his words.

Lady Juliette looked earnestly and calmly at the excited face of her guardian.

"Why so?" she asked.

"Because—because Guildford Owen is a determined man, and he has set his ambitious heart on this match; and he is acquainted with family secrets of deep import."

The colonel was here so agitated that he was compelled to pull out his fine, embroidered handkerchief, and wipe his heated brow.

"Juliette, promise me to marry him as—soon as he desires it. He writes me word that he is afraid you are old enough now to fall in love with somebody else. Lady Juliette, that must never be."

"I have made up my mind never to fall in love," replied Juliette, knitting her pretty white brows. "I mean to devote myself to all humanity, to think more of others than of myself. If I find Sir Guildford is a good man, I will marry him."

But here, in spite of her determination, a sort of shudder passed through the frame of the young Spartan.

"He will allow you to do as you like, no doubt," said the colonel. "You will be the richest, the most beautiful, the most envied woman in England."

Lady Juliette sighed and shook her head.

"When does Sir Guildford arrive?" she asked, after a pause.

"To-morrow morning. You will meet him at lunch; after that we will have the carriage ordered, and drive to Horley Castle, to show him the view. Next week the house will be full of visitors, but I wish to have the engagement settled and made public before then; do you understand?"

Juliette bowed her head in silent acquiescence.

"Then I have nothing farther to do save to receive him kindly?" asked Juliette.

"That is all. Good night; Heaven bless you, Juliette."

The colonel folded his beautiful ward in his arms in an embrace affectionate enough to have been that of the fondest parent.

Juliette went away, her pure heart filled with pity, wonder, and kindness. Poor colonel, how relieved he seemed at her docile promise to receive the elderly suitor kindly! Why was he so afraid of Sir Guildford Owen? and then, again, why had he turned so white when she had spoken of the recollections of her childhood? There was secret somewhere. What was it?

Juliette retired to rest early. That night she committed her future with perfect trust into the hand of the Father of all mercies, and then sank into repose. Her nature was as calm, steadfast, and self-possessed as that of the young schoolmaster was restless, fiery, passionate, and wayward. While she lay sleeping; he lay tossing about, wakeful, thinking presumptuously, madly, hopelessly of her.

At last he leaped out of bed, went to the window, leaned out, and watched the moonlight sleeping upon the distant hills, and gilding the greensward in the near meadows.

"Her nature," said Fernandez, "is, I fear, as cold as ice. She is a statue in marble. She would think me a madman if she understood that I presumed to think of her—to worship her, to—to—swear—"

He set his white teeth hard, and uttered a sort of wild oath. He took the moonlight and the foliage of the woods, the beautiful earth and the spangled heavens as witnesses to his maddened vow.

"I swear," he said, "that she shall love me, yonder little priceless pearl; cold, and proud, and hedged about by all the conventionalities of aristocratic life as she is; affianced to a gouty old merchant, as she is. Duty-loving, and calm, and utterly—utterly passionless as she seems, there are depths of love in those blue eyes; only the light has never yet revealed them, the magic word has not been spoken which can awaken them; they sleep, sleep, sleep, and the girl—she is a Lady Juliette, but she is only a girl—the girl fancies herself without human weakness. Oh, I know how self-possessed and stern she thinks herself; how elevated above the ordinary passions of frail mankind. Juliette, Juliette! I love you so that I could almost hate you for your excessive calm, your well-bred ease, the long, steady gaze of your blue eyes, at once so proud, so honest, and so kind. Oh, I must lie as a slave at your feet and grovel in the dust, while you cast at me a glance of cold rebuke or annihilating disdain. Is it to be so? I could kill you—or myself, rather than merit your contempt. You don't hate me, now—you don't despise me, now! You rather like me, and pity me in some proud, calm way."

Fernandez leaned his cheek in his hand, bent his head out into the summer night, and sighed a sigh of passion and discontent.

In this phase the young schoolmaster does not look so sensible, so noble, so generous, as we could wish to see him look. He was sighing after what, in this matter-of-fact existence, must have seemed like an impossibility. He, a tolling village schoolmaster, she, a peerless daughter of the nobility, and affianced, besides, to another man—not regarding him mean-while in any other light than that of a subordinate—surely there was something frantic in this wild passion. It must be kept in mind, however, that the hot blood of the south coursed through the veins of

Fernandez: he was impetuous and fierce, though possessing desperately warm affections. He could not honour Lady Juliette simply because she was an earl's daughter; he dared to love her because she was so wondrous fair, so wise, so graceful, so gifted of Heaven. He did not sleep until towards dawn, but he roused up in time to dress neatly and breakfast in comfort before he went to the school at nine o'clock. There he passed through the dreary and monotonous routine as well as he was able. Just as he was about to dismiss the boys he heard the sound of carriage wheels outside; another moment and there was a stoppage in front of the door, afterwards gay ringing female voices made the place re-echo, and then Florence Random tripped lightly into the room.

She was dressed elaborately, and the sunbrowned children stared at her bright amber satin skirt under a short one of black lace, her white embroidered muslin jacket and fichu of black lace, her boots laced with what looked like golden cord and with gold tassels on the tops. Then there were large diamonds that sparkled in her dainty ears and in the locket suspended by a golden chain round her white throat. Florence wore an amber satin hat with a black feather; most radiantly beautiful were her peachlike cheeks, her sparkling blue eyes, and the waves of her yellow hair.

"Oh, Mr. Fernandez," she said, "I have brought our new visitors to inspect your school. How nice it looks! and it would be such fun if you would just allow us to hear you examine the boys; they give such funny answers, don't they? We want something to make us laugh!"

All this was breathed in a low, confidential whisper into the ear of Fernandez.

He smiled a little bitterly. It did not please him that he and his humble little pupils were to be held up to ridicule and for the amusement of these fine visitors at the Abbey. He drew out his plain silver watch and consulted it.

"Half-past twelve, madame," he said, quietly. "I must not keep the boys after their time."

"Must not!" echoed Florence. She made a little grimace.

"I am sure, Mr. Fernandez," cried the coquette, pointing, "that you might do whatever you liked with the school. Why, we would give each of the young monks sixpence to buy cakes with, if they can buy cakes in Allonby, and I suppose they can,—at any rate, gingerbread. Now here comes Lady Juliette, and with her her future husband, Sir Guildford Owen."

At that moment it seemed to Fernandez as though a shadow had passed between him and the sun and blotted out all hope and brightness from his life.

Lady Juliette entered the room, leaning lightly on the arm of her affianced husband. She was more beautiful than any dream in the eyes of Fernandez. She wore simple white; an embroidered muslin skirt with a lace one over it. Her straw hat was wreathed about by a garland of natural roses—white, save one of glowing crimson in the centre. Upon her breast glowed another crimson rose, fastened by a plain golden brooch. Her rich dark hair was artistically plaited and arranged; her face, usually delicate and pale, was on this morning tinged with a bright, delicate vermilion; her blue eyes were bright and restless, he had never seen that expression in them before; they had always looked so steadfast, so calm. Was it the joy of love which glowed on her cheek and glittered in her eyes? No, it could not have been, for Sir Guildford Owen was the bridegroom elect; a short, stout man, who breathed hard and walked proudly; an alderman, who loved mock turtle and trifles. He was red-faced and his features wore coarse and expressionless. He was bald, his eyes were small and hidden in their sockets. The expression of the whole was peevish, almost repulsive; yet he held the Lady Juliette by the arm as if he meant to keep her to himself then and always. He stared at the schoolmaster, and an ill-natured frown knit the brows of the merchant prince.

Fernandez bowed low.

Sir Guildford did not return the salute save by a sulky half-nod. He said gruffly:

"Juliette,—he did not prefix the title—"I don't see much to interest us here. I have had so much to do with schools, and so on, in my time, I'm a little tired of them."

The gruff and pompous baronet did not, of course, allow these criticisms to reach the ear of Fernandez. At the same time, the schoolmaster saw the ill-tempered face and heard the grumbling tones like muttered thunder.

Lady Juliette glanced about with still that unwonted restlessness in the blue eyes, and the vermilion tint of the cheek deepened to a still lovelier glow. It seemed as if the rapt repose of her life was gone, perhaps gone for ever—who could say?

"Florence," she said, softly, "I think we are only

detaining Mr. Fernandez now; are we not, Mr. Fernandez? We shall not be able to continue our Spanish lessons this week," added her young ladyship, "for more visitors arrive to-morrow, and—"

"Speak for yourself, lady fair," cried Miss Random, gaily. "I shall be only too happy to continue my lessons, Mr. Fernandez." Here the London belle bowed to the young schoolmaster. "Come this evening at five o'clock and I will take all the instruction you have it in your power to give me during the space of an hour and a half. Come, Juliette."

Here the fair damsel waved her hand in a friendly adieu.

Lady Juliette hesitated, then all at once, dropping the fat arm of her affianced husband she walked straight up to the schoolmaster; she put a ten-shilling piece into his hand.

"To buy a large plum cake for the boys," she said; "I know children like plum cake."

"Hip, hip, hurrah!" burst from the lips of all the little ushubs, for Juliette had spoken loud enough for them to hear. She passed out, but catching en-glimpses of the face of Fernandez, she was startled to see how pale it was and how much it was agitated. She was assisted into the carriage by Sir Guildford Owen, who really seemed to scowl at her in an extraordinary fashion. Peerlessly beautiful, almost young enough to have been his grandchild, delicate, patrician, spiritual, she seemed a being lovely enough to have turned an ordinary man's brain. It did not appear, however, as though the stout city knight was inclined to commit any act of madness for her sweet sake; he was singularly self-possessed; he watched her jealously, and his eyes dwelt critically upon her loveliness, as if it would have dwelt upon the perfections of a picture or a statue which he might have been about to purchase. But Florence, watching everything from behind her hand, while the carriage rolled through the August woods, laughed to see how little love there was in the glances which the merchant prince of fifty odd years cast on the rosebud beauty in her teens; while as for her—

"I should like to know what is passing in that little heart," said Florence, to herself; but she could only judge from the colour that came and went upon the damask cheek, and the flashing of the blue eyes. Was it surprise, or scorn, or fear, or horror?

"That fellow in the school is not fitted for the situation," said Sir Guildford.

"I assure you he is highly gifted, and well educated," said Florence, mischievously.

"No doubt; but he does not know his place, and is too presumptuous. Lady Juliette, we are affianced, and Miss Random is your intimate friend; there is no harm, therefore, in my speaking openly in her presence. I think you are a little too familiar in your manner towards that sort of person; you placed your money in his hand—you should have laid it on the table; and you smiled at him graciously. You are a beauty and an earl's daughter—you are the affianced bride of a merchant of the City of London—whose name will go down to posterity as among the—the—the—" (the stout gentleman panted as he spoke, for the day was warm, and the exertion of speaking was tiresome)—"most honourable of the Guild—"

Florence broke into a ringing laugh.

The knight stared at the audacious Florence with a stupid stare; he felt nettled. But we may as well tell the reader at once that Sir Guildford Owen was stupid, selfish, an intensely obstinate and pompous man. He was so impressed with a high notion of his own merits, and so resolved to marry an earl's daughter, that he could not understand any lady's presuming to make fun of him.

"I merely wish to observe," continued Sir Guildford, "that I should never allow my wife even to speak to a man in that sphere of life, unless it be her own servants."

Florence saw a sudden flash from the blue eyes which startled her—she had never dreamed that there could be such smouldering fire in the quiet earnest nature, which seemed so gentle.

Another moment and Lady Juliette was looking calmly into the green woodland vistas through which the carriage was passing.

"You are very silent, Lady Juliette," observed the stout baronet.

Thereupon Juliette turned towards him and began to discourse on poems, and pictures, and plays, and politics. She talked well; her judgment was far beyond her years; she could warm into enthusiasm over a favourite book, or character, or drama, or painting.

The knight had not much to say in return: he talked as the last reviews talked, omitting their excellence of diction and their flow of wit; he remembered that it was good to praise such a picture and cry down such a book, and he talked on in a heavy

lumbering way, staring meanwhile very inquisitively at his bride elect. A new idea took shape and grew in the mind of the merchant prince: his affianced was, in the old-fashioned sense of the word, too blue, and dealt freely with books, and thoughts, and ideas, and politics, and the great questions which stir the heart of poor, frail, wonderful humanity.

Lady Juliette was—despite her graceful youth, her exquisite loveliness, her feminine accomplishments—that difficult problem, an intellectual and thinking woman. This was not to be allowed—this was not the model for the conduct of the beautiful titled wife of a merchant prince; oh no, such restless strivings after the benefit of humankind might sit well upon some philanthropic widow or spinster, who busied herself in day-schools for the benefit of the ragged London children; but a Lady Juliette Owen (that would be her title) might be required to put down her name for a hundred guinea subscription to some of those institutions, but never must she perplex her brain or wrinkle her fair brow with thoughts respecting the "common herd," for in this fashion did the pompous knight regard the toiling and the destitute.

"I shall not permit you to distress yourself with these thoughts," said Sir Guildford, at length. "You will find your time fully occupied in attending to the duties of your position. You will rise and breakfast, receive visitors, or pay visits; you will lunch, and then drive in the park. After that you will return to dinner; after that there will be every night in the season the opera, the ball, or an assembly at our house in Park Lane. You have never seen my house in Park Lane," continued Sir Guildford Owen, his red face growing purple with pride.

"Good Heavens! Sir Guildford, you have quite overpowered me. Juliette, my dear, have you not a scent bottle—I am quite faint," cried the volatile Florence.

Juliette, fully comprehending the mockery of her gay friend, did not respond to it by smile or frown. She gravely handed her a carved, scent case of silver with a stopper of yellow topaz.

This impertinability was too much for Florence, and she exploded with laughter.

Sir Guildford stared from one to the other in perfect amaze. Had both laughed, great would have been his wrath, but Lady Juliette was by this time pale and serious-looking.

"There are the ruins," cried Florence. "Now we shall have a magnificent view. Shall we descend here?"

"Really," panted Sir Guildford, "I can see no pleasure, Miss Random, in climbing a hill in the heat of the sun. I think I would rather remain here; and if Lady Juliette will be guided by me she will not expose herself to the danger of sunstroke, but will remain in the carriage under shelter of these trees."

"Sir Guildford," said Lady Juliette, speaking with an energetic determination which astonished the rich baronet. "I am something of a landscape painter; and the view from the ruins is a treat which I would not exchange for a sight of all the rich furniture in her Majesty's palaces. Pardon me—I must climb the hill. You may remain here in the carriage."

"No," said Sir Guildford, stepping hastily out; "where you go I go."

Here he offered his stout arm to his bride elect. With evident shrinking Juliette accepted it. Florence led the way, and the little party began the ascent of the hill.

"I shall never permit you, Lady Juliette, married or unmarried, to walk, or drive, or visit, unless I accompany you," panted stout Sir Guildford.

Juliette shrank more away from the arm, her pale face grew white, she set her teeth, and her breathing grew short and laboured.

The gay Florence, in her amber satin and black lace, tripped lightly onwards, and her cheerful, loud soprano voice came to the ears of Juliette. She was singing an Italian air and climbing a steep hill at the same moment.

"I should wish you to drop that young lady's intimacy, after we are married," said Sir Guildford.

Juliette smiled faintly. Her lips moved, but she did not speak. Accommodating her pace to that of the gouty merchant, she toiled slowly up the steep ascent. At length they stood among the ruins of the feudal castle.

The view was magnificent, commanding a vast expanse of country—woods, lawns, rivers—towns in the distance, undulating hills, blue mountains against the far horizon, and in one spot a glimpse of the sea.

"Oh, it is glorious, glorious," cried Florence, clapping her hands. "And what a delightful breeze. Let us sit down now. What a pity we have no wine or sandwiches!"

"I hope," said Sir Guildford, "that Lady Juliette is not fond of that common-place way of enjoying herself."

"I am, Sir Guildford—I delight in a pic-nic." "Bad taste," panted the baronet, and he shook his head.

Juliette only smiled—a sad smile.

Soon the little party descended the hill, and re-entered the carriage.

Sir Guildford had most of the conversation to himself during the drive home, for Florence had relapsed into a thoughtful mood, and Juliette was more than ordinarily silent.

So the merchant prince pressed on to his heart's content.

Arrived at the Abbey, they went each their several ways—Juliette to her own apartment, and Florence to hers, where she dismissed her maid and flung herself upon her bed, after taking off her rich dress and wrapping herself in a dressing robe.

"I will sleep until it is time to dress for my five o'clock lesson," said the coquette to herself. "I wish to complete my conquest of that dark-eyed young artist. I must hear him rave and stamp as they do on the stage, before I leave the Abbey." And secure in the belief that she would live to enjoy the sight of Fernandez tormented by a hopeless passion for herself, the unfeeling Florence fell asleep.

Sir Guildford, meanwhile, went to his room, called for his valet, was duly brushed and bathed, and dressed and perfumed, curled and arrayed; then sent a message to Colonel Philbertson—"could he see him?"

The answer came back, "Yes, certainly."

So Sir Guildford was shown to the library, where the colonel sat awaiting him. After the usual greetings, and when the door was secured, Sir Guildford began thus:

"Colonel, your ward does not sufficiently appreciate the great advantages that would result to her from a marriage with myself. She is a very obstinate person; lovely, certainly, and I have always set my heart upon allying myself to that noble family, in fact I am quite resolved upon it; but, colonel, something strikes me, an instinct I suppose, that this headstrong young woman has no intention of fulfilling the engagement. Colonel Philbertson, she must be forced. I know quite well that you can manage this if you like. If I am disappointed in this matter, colonel, I shall blame you and I shall punish you. I shall say it is your fault, and all the dreadful circumstances connected with the earl's death shall be published."

The colonel turned white.

"For the love of Heaven, Sir Guildford, don't be so cruel," he cried. "I will do all I can for you with Juliette, but how am I to force her? You know the law won't allow me."

"Threaten her," cried Sir Owen; "if she refuses, lock her up. I tell you time is going on, I am getting into years; I was resolved to graft that noble Norman stock upon the tree of the Owens if my son had lived, but as it is, I, the father, have made up my mind to marry this lady. She is not respectful, and she is not affectionate. This morning she absolutely refused to allow me to kiss her!"

"She is a very reserved girl," observed the colonel.

"Not half enough so," cried Sir Guildford. "Why you should have seen her familiar manner with that schoolmaster down in the village, giving him money for the children, and instead of putting it on the table, placing it in his hand."

"Oh, in the country we are all forced to condescend a little to those kind of people," cried the colonel.

"I shall insist upon Lady Juliette keeping up her dignity," said Sir Guildford.

"Well, well, well, after you are married, Sir Guildford, of course."

"And I insist upon the marriage taking place at once."

"I assure you, Sir Guildford, that persuasions, threats, everything short of sheer force, shall be used on your behalf."

The colonel spoke nervously; evidently Sir Guildford held him in his power; there was a black and ugly secret somewhere.

The conference lasted long, but it is not expedient yet awhile to permit the reader to understand the nature of that mystery of past years, which bound the colonel captive to the will of the merchant prince.

Lady Juliette did not take her lesson with Fernandez that evening. At dinner Florence appeared radiant in beauty, brilliant in toilette, joyous in manner. Juliette was pale, calm, lovely, dressed in dark blue satin and white lace, a circlet of diamonds round her throat. She was pensive, and hung her head; she seemed like a graceful snow-drop. Sir Guildford sat next to her, but he was soon aware that she met all his advances with a studied coldness. After dinner she approached the colonel.

"Colonel," she said, "I wish to speak to you alone in the library, when you have finished your wine."

"I will come now," cried her guardian, eagerly. "I do not wish for more wine, gentlemen," nodding towards Mapleton and Sir Guildford. "Lady Juliette wishes to speak with me; pray excuse me;" and he took Juliette by the hand, and led her into the library. He closed and bolted the door; the lamp was lighted; he pointed to a chair, but the young beauty remained standing before him. She clasped her fair hands firmly.

"Dear colonel," she said, "I will never marry Sir Guildford Owen. I would rather die."

"You have seen nothing of him," burst forth her guardian. "My dear Juliette, you will be the richest woman in England!"

"I would not marry him if I might become Empress of France," said Juliette, calmly.

"Juliette! Juliette! why is this?"

The colonel's voice was broken, as it seemed, by grief.

"Because, dear colonel, he is selfish, stupid, ignoble. He would make me wish for death, and that is a wicked wish. No, dear colonel, don't ask it of me."

"But I must, I must," cried the colonel, grasping her slight hand fiercely. "Girl, you don't know what you are doing. If you refuse, I shall say you are mad, and shut you up in a lunatic asylum!"

There was a fearful energy of passion in the colonel's words. Juliette drooped her head, and her young heart beat so loudly that the excited colonel could hear the throbs. She saw contention was useless; there were two roads only open to her—marriage with a detested man, or unjust imprisonment for life.

"You know," continued the colonel, "what a quiet, studious girl you are, always troubling yourself about public questions. You are so much wiser than other women, that I shall have no difficulty in persuading the world that you are much more foolish—the world is easily hoodwinked! Choose, Juliette, Guildford Owen, or imprisonment for life. If you reject Sir Guildford, from the time you leave this room you will be a prisoner."

Juliette looked on the ground, then raised her eyes, and looked at her guardian with a peculiar expression.

"I will marry, then," she said.

"You will? Heaven bless you!" and her guardian folded her in his arms.

Juliette quietly extricated herself from his embrace, and glided from the room. She found her way to her own chamber. Her maid, Finette, was busy there trimming a satin jacket for her young mistress. A lamp burnt brightly on a small, carved sideboard, and Finette sat close to the light. She rose when Juliette entered.

"Are you not well, my lady?"

Juliette was deadly pale; she sat down hastily, and put her hand to her brow.

"I am not at all well, Finette, but it will pass off presently, I suppose. I feel so strangely ill."

"Is it the heat, your ladyship?"

"No, Finette. I am going to do something very desperate, but something that I consider right. Finette, will you help me, and—keep my secret?"

"They should sooner tear out my tongue than I would reveal it," cried the passionate Italian, speaking in her own language.

"Listen then," said Juliette.

CHAPTER XIV.

When shall we three meet again,
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Shakespeare.

THERE was some truth in the spiteful criticism of the pompous Sir Guildford. Fernandez was something of a fop, and something of a fool, in the usual sense of that word when it is simply applied to a headstrong young man who has set his insatiable desire upon an unattainable object.

It was night. He had given his lesson to Miss Random, but had seen nothing of beautiful Juliette; probably he might never see her again; probably that stout and hideous man might forbid his bride elect to take any more Spanish lessons. Fernandez, artist as he was, knew that he was a superbly handsome man. He could not help knowing what was so palpable to him every time he looked in his glass. He was not vain; yet he dressed himself to the utmost advantage that his means allowed, now, that is, that he was in love, and he wondered in a kind of aurlly wonderment whether his good looks would recommend him in the slightest degree to the daughter of the proud Cadettes. But soon he came to the wise conclusion that the peerless Juliette was far too lofty in intellect and too dignified in character to be fascinated by his large southern eyes, faultless Greek profile, or long, sweeping lashes. She might like to paint his head as a model, perhaps; but surely that was all, and as for feeling anything like love for him, was not the thought the direst madness?

Still he had sworn that that great result should come about—how he knew not. There is something fearfully presumptuous in a mere human creature taking these oaths and daring, as it were, the power of fate itself to deprive them of their object. The young man sat before his easel. He was working away fiercely at a painting in oils, done from memory. It was a likeness of the Lady Juliette. Fernandez pictured her in the blue riding-habit she had worn when he had first seen her and held her for a brief moment in his arms. The long, dark hair hung down on one shoulder; the exquisite moulding of the rounded bust and slender waist was dashed in with a masterly hand; the face, with the great earnest, quiet eyes and lovely features, was, in truth, a speaking face; the lips were slightly apart. So had Juliette looked when she thanked him after his rescuing her.

He was now fain to confess that he was worn out.

It was four o'clock of a summer morning and the woods, fields, and gardens were glittering with dew, which the beams of the sun were fast kissing away. He must sleep for a couple of hours or so, or he would not be able to perform his daily tasks. So he flung himself down upon his little horse-hair sofa, drew a travelling rug over him, and sank off into the deepest repose. He slept more than four hours—he awoke at eight o'clock, and he was awakened only by the clatter of breakfast preparations and the voice of his landlady.

"Lor' bless you, Mr. Fernand! What, stopped up all night to paint a pretty picter? Bless me! Lady Juliette, sure enough."

The old lady adjusted her spectacles, and smiled a smile of pleasure.

Fernandez started up and began to rub his eyes; he had not meant his landlady to see the likeness.

"Is this done by order, sir?" inquired the good soul, innocently.

Fernandez was glad she took it in that light; he would not have the landlady know that he had been making what answered to a graven image with his own hands—an image which it was his desire to fall down and worship.

"Oh," said he, hastily, putting easel and painting into his closet, and locking the door, "you must not say anything about it; it may not please the family at the Abbey."

"Bless you, it ought to, sir; why, I call it a perfect picter. See, sir, I've got the coffee and toast, and a nice bit of bacon. I hope you will like your breakfast, sir."

"Thank you, madam."

The young Spaniard was always polite to every woman. He was just about to seat himself when he caught sight suddenly of a letter directed in full to himself lying close to his tea-cup.

"Eugene Fernandez, Esq., Honeyeuckle Cottage, Allonby, near Kirbyton, Herefordshire."

Fernandez looked ghastly pale when he saw that writing; his lips moved, but he did not speak. His landlady had left the room without perceiving his excessive agitation. He read the letter and his white face grew crimson hot, then paled into a livid hue. Again he read the letter, and this time a frenzy seemed to possess him. He rushed out of the house into the garden, and then along the country lane, without a hat. Those who met him turned to look after him, but he saw them not. He made straight for the house of the Rev. Arthur Clenham. He reached it at last. It stood back behind a stone wall, which was skirted by tall laurel bushes. The curate was in the garden, and did not see the schoolmaster until he heard his step and felt his hand upon his shoulder.

"Why, what in the world is the matter?" asked the curate, kindly.

"Mr. Clenham, you are the only man I can call friend in the world," replied the young man. "My heart is torn, my brain is on fire; help me, for the love of Heaven!"

"I will," replied the curate, "if it is in the power of a poor mortal like myself."

"I want two hundred pounds before Monday," said Fernandez; "this is Wednesday. Oh, can't you borrow it for me?"

The curate flushed, and then grew pale.

"I am a very poor man," he faltered, "all I have is at your disposal—some thirty odd pounds—but to borrow it seems impossible."

"Then I must shoot myself."

Fernandez put his hand to his head, and his face was ghastly to look upon.

"Tell me what it is?" asked the curate, gently.

"I am threatened with disgrace, exposure, everything that can make a man despise his life. Will you not believe me?"

"Tell me what you mean, Fernandez?"

"I have done nothing wrong," replied Fernandez, "but—but read that letter," and he placed the letter received that morning in the curate's hand.

Mr. Clenham read, and as he read his colour changed; he looked up full of pity at Fernandez.

"Anyhow, we must try and raise this money," he said. "Leave it to me for the present. Go to the school; don't offend Upperton at such a juncture. I would advise you to finish your duties early this afternoon and trust me to tell the vicar that you will be called to London this evening by most important business. You must have the pupil teacher from the next village to take your place for the next few days, and you'll pay him—at least, I will."

Fernandez grasped the curate's hand gratefully.

"By the night train you and I will start for London," continued the curate; "and we must try and find out a means of obtaining the money."

The generous young pastor took the fevered hand of his young friend and led him into his house. Fernandez hastily attended to his toilette, but he found it quite impossible to swallow a morsel of food; it seemed to choke him. Afterwards he went into the school, and did his duty there as well as he was able. He could eat no dinner. He went again to afternoon school, and returned to pack his small portmanteau, and dress in travelling costume. At six o'clock the curate appeared, prepared for a journey, and carrying a bag in his hand.

"I have made it all right with the vicar," he said, "and engaged a young fellow to take your place till Monday. Come along, Fernandez."

The two had to walk a mile to the little railway-station. Arrived there, they perceived that the hot summer day was about to end in storm and tempest: the rolling of thunder, the flashing of lightning, the dash and uproar of heavily falling rain soon engaged the attention of the passengers.

Fernandez stood at the door of the little waiting-room. Two ladies, closely veiled, approached him. One wore a rustling black silk dress; the other was dressed in a dark gray cashmere, soft and fine, and braided with rich black braid. Her mantle was of fine cloth of the same gray colour as the robe; the bonnet was of the like hue, but the veil of thick crape utterly hid the face.

The young man moved aside to allow the ladies to enter. Then he heard the one in black silk speak Italian, and he knew by the accent that the girl was from Italy.

"The train starts in ten minutes, signora. Nobody recognises us here."

Then the veiled lady answered softly:

"Hush, Finette; my life depends on your discretion."

Was she so closely veiled that her own sight was imperfect? Surely it was so, else she would have feared to speak Italian before the young linguist; but Lady Juliette thought no more of him than she thought of the great trees which were rocking about in the storm in the Abbey Park.

Fernandez started and his heart seemed to stand still. What fate brought those two together again in tempest, and sent them off in the same hour to the great city, each on a secret errand? Where was it all to end? Unconscious Juliette knew not what burning eyes were on her when she took her place with Finette in a first-class carriage. Fernandez and the curate travelled second.

One hundred and fifty miles lay between Allonby station and the great London terminus. On, on, through the night, each with a secret mission to perform, while the storm raged and tore the roofs from houses, and smote down church steeples.

That storm was but a type of the tempestuous love, shame, and anguish which rent the heart of Eugene Fernandez.

(To be continued.)

STATUE OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, FOR BOMBAY.

THE statue of Her Majesty, presented to the inhabitants of Bombay and of India by His Highness Maharaja Khuderao Guicowar Sena Khushkhyal Shamsher Bahadoor, knight of the most exalted order of the Star of India, is now on its way to India. The work, it will be remembered, consists of canopy, statue, plinth, and steps, and is about 45ft. in height, the whole being executed in marble. The statue is Cararra; the canopy, Sicilian, with light Sienna enrichments.

The figure of the Queen is seated as if in the House of Lords, wearing her robes of state, with the decorations of the order of the Garter and the order of the Star of India, on her head the diadem, and in her hands are the sceptre and orb. The statue has been modelled to a scale of 8ft. 6in., and has both repose and dignity, with an admirable likeness of the august original. The royal arms are sculptured on the front of the pedestal, and the star of India is on the centre of the canopy. In the enrichments are blended the rose of England with the lotus of India, and the mottoes, "God and my Right," and "The Light of Heaven our Guide." On

panels at the sides and back of the canopy there are inscriptions in English and in three of the languages of India. About 250 tons of marble have been used in the work. Mr. Matthew Noble is the sculptor.

When it reaches its destination we have no doubt it will be admired and appreciated by the dusky millions of the sunny land over which Queen Victoria reigns.

LADY BARBARA.

CHAPTER XXV.

THERE was something in the appearance of Felix Wamer that impressed the Narra strangely and unpleasantly, as he strode into the little parlour of their hired cottage at Chiswick, after his visit to the chamber of the imprisoned Dora.

Jack Narr was sitting alone in the dark by the open window, almost within view of young Mr. Weir, who still remained perched in the tree outside Dora's window, but totally oblivious of the young man's proximity. He arose, as Wamer and Mrs. Narr entered, the latter bearing a light, and hastily shut down the window, coming forward with a beaming face and unsteady gait.

Despite her uneasiness in regard to her guest, Mrs. Narr scrutinised her husband sharply, and demanded, as she set down the candle:

"Have you been out of the house since Mr. Wamer and I went upstairs?"

Jack's flushed face grew redder. He answered, huskily:

"Only round the corner, for the candles and meat—that's all."

"Well, I should think you'd been drinking, if I didn't know you hadn't any money," said Mrs. Narr. "And I believe you have, too," she added.

"Needn't say nothing. You drink too!" said Jack sulkily, the truth being that he had regaled himself on his favourite beverage out of the money with which Dora had bribed him.

Mrs. Narr turned her attention to Wamer, who was still standing, and who was regarding the couple with a gaze that both felt to be uncomfortable.

"Is there anything wrong, Mr. Wamer?" demanded Mrs. Narr, uneasily.

"Anything up?" asked Narr, jauntily, and with a certain air of consequence due to his recent liberation. "Girl hotly and set up?"

"She utterly refused my proposals," said Wamer, in a tone of ill-humour. "She rejected all my overtures with indignation—"

"She did?" ejaculated Narr, in a jauntily sort of surprise. "Strange! You ought to have made your proposals such as she could listen to them. Miss Dora ain't one to tamely submit to an insult. Old saying's a true one—'Blood will tell'—"

"Jack!" cried his wife, warningly; "you've been drinking."

With a brave assumption of marital authority, Narr retorted:

"A woman's place to hush! Man's privilege to talk! and I'm going to exercise the privilege. Mr. Wamer," he added, defiantly, turning to his guest, "I have said it, and I repeat it, and I don't know as it'll hurt anybody if I say it the third time; 'Blood will tell!' That girl upstairs is the equal of anybody, if I do say it!"

Wamer pushed a chair into the gloomy space beyond the circle of light and sat down.

Mrs. Narr whispered a hasty warning to her husband to be more discreet, and Wamer caught her concluding words, "penal servitude for life!"

Narra seemed sobered a little, and sat down also.

"It is time we understood each other thoroughly," said Wamer, after a pause, watching the two with furtive keenness. "I have this evening made to Dora a proposal of marriage. I have offered to make her my wife, and to take her to Champney Mere, and introduce her to my noble kinsman; but she has refused me!"

"She may think better of her refusal," said Mrs. Narr, cautiously.

"She will not. She cannot pardon the advantage I took of her changed and desolate condition to make her that other proposal. She has all the fine and haughty instincts of her race—of a true woman, and she will never willingly marry me!"

"You will give her up, then?" asked Mrs. Narr. "Wish he would," said Jack Narr, jauntily. "Know how to make a big pile of money out of her! Girl's a fortune to us!"

"I will not give her up!" said Wamer, paying no heed to Narr. "She shall be mine—my wife—whether she will or no! You, Mrs. Narr, must bring the necessary screws to bear, and compel her to accept me!"

There was a tone of authority in Wamer's voice that struck the woman with a vague sense of anxiety and increased uneasiness.

"I'll see what I can do," she said. "Of course we will be well paid?"

"I will recompense you according to your deserts," returned Wamer, coolly. "Before we go any further, we may as well understand each other. I have already a claim upon your cupidty, but, from a chance word of Narr's, I see that you have considered the possibility of making a larger speculation out of another than me. Now mark me. I am the only safe person for you to deal with, and it is for your interest to be true to me. Understand?"

"What do you mean?" demanded Mrs. Narr. "I mean that I can send you both to penal servitude for life!" replied Wamer, coolly.

Narr half bounded from his chair.

Mrs. Narr grew ghastly pale, and her features hardened themselves to the likeness of stone.

"You have said so much, Mr. Wamer," she said, in a strange voice, "that you'd better go on!"

There was a desperate gleam in her eyes that enforced the suggestion.

Wamer eyed the startled pair with the eye of a master.

"You are anxious to have me unbosom myself, eh?" he asked. "Very well. This girl upstairs—this slender, graceful, dainty young creature, known as Dora Chessom—is not your daughter!"

Mrs. Narr uttered a strange ejaculation—half terror, half menace.

"Not our daughter!" exclaimed Narr, half sobered.

"Who told you?"

Mrs. Narr put up her hand feebly. The shock of Wamer's announcement seemed almost to paralyse her.

"What do you mean, Mr. Wamer?" she asked huskily, mechanically using the same words she had used before.

"I mean," responded Wamer, "that the girl upstairs is not of your blood; but that she is, in reality, Barbara, the only child and heiress of Lord Champney of Champney Mere!"

Mrs. Narr uttered a shrill cry.

"It is not so!" she gasped.

"It is so!" asserted Wamer, raising his voice. "Let me tell you the story, and revive your memory. Twenty years ago, you, Catharine Narr, were a waiting-maid, or nurse, in the family of Sir Graham Gallagher, then plain Doctor Gallagher, in London. You left his service to marry the tenant of a small dairy farm in Surrey. About three years later—just seventeen years ago—you had a child born, a daughter—"

"Yes, Dora!" whispered Mrs. Narr, her haggard black eyes fixed in a burning gaze on Wamer.

"Not Dora! At about the same time Lady Champney gave birth to a daughter. Doctor Gallagher was her ladyship's attendant. For weeks thereafter her ladyship was too ill even to bear the presence of the child, and by the advice of the doctor, your former employer, this child was taken to you and left in your charge."

"That's all so," muttered Narr; "only the girl wasn't Miss Dora!"

A slow, strange smile curled Wamer's lips.

"Shall I go on?" he asked, looking from one to the other of the blanched faces and trembling figures. "Shall I recall the forgery committed by idle, drunken, dissolute Jack Narr? Shall I tell you how, to avoid the consequences of his crime, and to enjoy its fruits, a flight was determined on? Shall I recall to you how, a day or two before your flight, your child—your own offspring—was taken ill with some infantile disease and died? You remember all this?"

Catharine Narr looked at Wamer dumbly, a haggard fear staring from her eyes.

"It wasn't our child that died!" she whispered.

"It was the other!"

"It was your child! The fact is patent. Look at your husband's face, woman! Is not the truth plainly written there?"

Mrs. Narr slowly turned her head and looked at her husband. He was completely sobered, and was cowering in his chair, the picture of an abject and absolute terror.

"You see?" said Wamer. "The man's looks declare his guilt. Do you still intend to brave out your denial of the girl's identity? Now listen to me. I know that your child was buried as your nursing, and that when you fled from the Surrey farm, you took the little heiress with you as your own child, probably with the idea that at some future period you might reap a handsome sum by restoring her to her parents! Afterwards, finding the child an encumbrance, and not daring to open negotiations with Lady Champney, and his lordship having gone abroad, you sold the little child to a rich Sussex squire, whose wife had taken a fancy to the little one. With the money thus obtained, you two went to America, from which you have recently returned to take up the game where you left it. Deny this if you can!"

The Narrs made no attempt to deny it. Pale and stupefied, they sat like criminals awaiting sentence. Even the woman's bravado had forsaken her now.

"You came back," said Wamer, "and separating at Chester, where you had friends, I presume, Mrs. Narr went on alone to Chessom Grange as a widow, expecting to receive a large sum of hush-money from Mr. Chessom, who idolised his darling. Mr. Chessom's death, and his son's avarice, put a new aspect on the face of affairs. You took the girl and came on to London, rejoicing in her beauty, and resolved to make money out of her in some way. You fancied you had in her a fortune. You thought you would make her support you by teaching. You thought to make money by selling her to me. And, at times, you have thought of revealing the secret to Lord and Lady Champney, having first made a bargain with them for your own safety and a liberal sum of money! You see how much I know, and how well I read you!"

Narr groaned heavily. His wife breathed hard, and clenched her hands nervously and spasmodically.

"Now, let me show you just where you are," said the triumphant Wamer. "That old forgery business is still hanging over you, Jack Narr. I've been to your old Surrey farm to-day, and searched out the whole matter. The man whose name you forged has got the idea that you have returned to the country, and has set a detective on your track. This detective is like a blood-hound, circling on your trail, and at every lessening circle he draws nearer to you. Jack Narr, you are on the brink of arrest and punishment!"

Narr's shrill wail rang through the room, and the man fell on his knees, pleading for protection and mercy at the hands of Wamer.

"Save me!" he pleaded. "Save me! I will devote my life to you. Oh, if I hadn't come back to England! Save me, Mr. Wamer and I will be your slave!"

"I will see," said Wamer, calmly. "I can save you, and perhaps I will. Mrs. Narr, you have laid yourself liable to a life-long punishment on the charge of kidnapping Lord Champney's child, and of substituting for it your own dead offspring—"

"You can't prove that Dora is the Champney child," interposed Mrs. Narr, flushing sullenly through the pallor of her despair.

"I can prove it. Sir Graham Gallagher, the physician, and Lord Champney, the father, as well as the nurse who attended Lady Champney, can all swear to the fact that on the arm of the baby heiress was a birth-mark—a scarlet, irregular cross, of peculiar shape and vividness. That cross I have seen to-night upon the arm of Dora Chessom."

Mrs. Narr was staggered. The sullen flush faded from her face.

A pause followed, during which the branches of the tree against the window brushed the paucers as if they were in violent agitation.

The occupants of the parlour neither heard nor heeded the sound.

"What are you going to do with us?" asked Mrs. Narr, at last, in a stifled voice.

"That depends upon yourself," was the response.

"How? Will you give us a chance yet?"

"Yes. This girl stands between me and one of the fairest inheritances in England. I love her madly. If I marry her this week, she will bring me immediately all the grandeur and glories I should otherwise be compelled to wait years for, if I got them at all, now that she is in my way, for Lord Champney would bestow upon his daughter a princely dowry. I am tired of being the humble secretary—the poor relation—the hanger-on of a great man. I want to be rich on my own account, with estates, and rent-rolls, and servants, and honours. And all these the Lady Barbara Champney upstairs—the young Lady Barbara—can bring me. Now, I'll make a compact with you. Make the girl marry me, and I'll not only protect you both from the law, but will settle on you the sum of five hundred pounds a year!"

Jack Narr immediately ascended from the depths of despair to the heights of hope and bliss.

Mrs. Narr's gloom lightened a little.

"How are we to force her to marry you, Mr. Wamer?" she asked.

"How? Why, she believes you to be her own parents. Shut her up in the cellar, if need be, to break her spirit; feed her on bread and water. Try oppression and cruelty; make her fear you. And if she holds out still, there are drugs, I have heard, which paralyse a person's will, and render them as submissive, and pliable, and gentle as a wax image. I'll try them, if other means fail. What do you say? Are you willing to work for me, heart and soul?"

The Narrs assented with feverish haste. The way out of their peril seemed to them delightfully easy.

"We will obey you, Mr. Wamer," said Mrs. Narr, humbly enough. "We are willing to do in everything as you say. And, in return, you will protect us?"

"Yes, I promise it. And when the girl becomes my wife, and I take her to her parents, and cause them to acknowledge her, then I will pay you the handsome reward I have promised—five hundred pounds down, and the same sum yearly, so long as you live."

Mrs. Narr's haggard eyes began to glow with reviving hope and cupidty.

Wamer arose, and walked slowly to and fro the room, giving his instructions as he proceeded.

Finally, as he became thoughtful, Narr asked tremulously:

"Are we to stay here in the Black Cottage, Mr. Wamer? Won't the detective find me here?"

"He will, if you stay. I've got a place in my mind's eye for you to go to. You must abandon the name of Narr, and begin anew. Hark! What's that?"

He halted, listening, as again the branches of the tree swept the window-pane.

The next moment, with a wild look, he bounded to the door, and sprang out in the porch.

The Narrs flew after him.

They were just in time to see Dora dropping from the lowest branch of the tree, into the arms of young Mr. Weir!

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE astonishment and rage of Wamer, as he beheld Dora in the very act of escaping with his rival, for a moment held him spellbound.

Then, with a cry that rang through the garden like a summons to battle, he bounded towards the young couple.

The Narrs, alive to the situation, sprang after him.

Dora, by this time on the ground beside the young man, clung to the latter in a wild dismay.

"Oh, Noel, Noel!" she whispered. "What shall we do? The gate is locked. Escape is impossible. You will have to leave me!"

"Never!" returned Noel, with an energy that went far to reassure her. "Trust in me, Dora. All is not yet lost!"

He put his arm around her, slowly retreating to the angle of the house.

By this time Wamer had regained his coolness and self-possession.

"See here, Mr. Weir," he exclaimed, in a tone that at any other time would have angered the spirited young man. "What do you mean by stealing, like a thief, into people's gardens at this hour. Is it like an honourable man to try to steal away from her parents' protection a young girl too innocent and inexperienced in the ways of the world to know what risks she is running?"

"Pardon me," replied Noel, in a tone of cool and supreme contempt, "but I fail to see the appropriateness of Mr. Wamer's assumed solicitude for the reputation of a young lady whom he has insulted most grossly."

"You can at least see that you are laying yourself liable to a charge of abducting a minor, I suppose?" demanded Wamer, sharply, stung to fury. "Release the arm of that misguided girl, and let her mother assume the charge of her!"

"I utterly decline to do so," replied Noel, halting by a clump of lilacs at the corner of the cottage, and waving back Wamer and the Narrs. "Mr. and Mrs. Narr have proved themselves unfit to have the charge of an innocent girl. They are ready to sell her to you, without regard to Dora's welfare. And, moreover," he added, looking fixedly at Wamer, "I doubt that Dora is the daughter of these people!"

"You doubt it?" cried Wamer, foaming.

"I do. They have yet to display the first token of parental regard for Dora. From the first moment of beholding her, they have conspired against her happiness, her honour, her well-being. I would as soon give Dora up to wild beasts as to them!"

The young man spoke firmly, and as if he felt himself able to withstand the three opposed to him.

Wamer sneered.

"You refuse to give her up, eh?" he exclaimed.

"How do you propose to escape with her? The gate is locked. A single cry from me will bring here a policeman, or a watchman, who will take you in charge for burglary. What have you to say to that?"

The young man bent his head to Dora, who still clung to him, but who was now ready to bear her share in the struggle.

"Dora," whispered her young lover, "now is our time! I will keep these three at bay, while you fly. Run around to the rear wall. Climb by the vines over into Sir Graham Gallagher's garden, and make for the street beyond. Wait for me in the shadow of the hedge by the doctor's double gates. Go!"

"Without you, Noel?" asked the girl, trembling anew. "I cannot leave you alone with them!"

"I shall be quite safe. I will escape over the front wall, and rejoin you at the earliest possible moment. Now, Dora—now!"

He put her gently from him.

As quick as thought, Dora obeyed him, disappearing behind the angle of the house.

Wamer, comprehending her movement, cried out hoarsely, and sprang towards Dora's lover.

The next moment the two engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle.

The Nars were for the instant spellbound and speechless.

"After her!" cried Wamer, from the midst of his contest. "After the girl!"

Narr and his wife bounded away in pursuit.

Meanwhile Dora had gained the rear garden, had crossed it with the fleetness of a fawn, and had commenced to climb the wall by means of the trained peach-trees and vines along its surface.

The cries of the Nars as they came in sight of her only spurred her to wilder exertions.

She gained the top of the wall, her hands smarting and bleeding, her chest panting.

Pausing a moment on her narrow footing, she looked sharply through the night gloom for some mode of descending into the physician's garden.

The ladder which Sir Graham's gardener had carelessly left leaning against the wall attracted her gaze.

At the same moment, the Nars, rushing over their gloomy waste of a yard towards her, called out to her to stop—that escape was impossible.

"We'll see if it is!" said Dora, bravely. "I will not give up until I am compelled to!"

She ran along the narrow top of the wall, her lithe, slender figure swaying, her arms outstretched to balance herself and prevent her from falling, a strange sensation of dizziness creeping over her.

She gained the ladder and commenced the descent into Sir Graham's garden.

At this juncture Narr commenced to ascend the wall on the opposite side.

His mutterings and cursings reached Dora's ears. Half-way down the ladder, the girl made a misstep, in her haste, and fell headlong to the ground.

Narr heard her fall, and redoubled his exertions to reach her, but the sound of his frequent slipping attested that the vines he had selected were scarcely strong enough to bear his weight.

Dora arose hastily, bruised and wounded from her fall, and darted into the gloomy shadows of Sir Graham's garden, making for the point to which Noel had directed her.

The silence of midnight was on the scene. The paths and alleys of the doctor's garden were all wrapped in the gloom of a deep shade. Dora crept along the dark labyrinth like a deeper shadow.

She could still hear Narr on his side of the partition wall, cursing loudly, and calling on her to come back and surrender herself.

Suddenly, a woman's shriller cry, sounding nearer, startled the girl, compelling her to pause and look back.

She beheld Mrs. Narr upon the top of the wall, creeping cautiously upon her hands and knees, along the narrow surface, to the spot where the gardener's ladder was still standing.

"Why didn't I throw the ladder down?" thought Dora, in keen regret. "Too late! She will soon be upon me."

She quickened her steps, flying through the shadows like a spirit.

She passed a handsome fountain, whose steady ceaseless dripping sounded like a gentle, endless flow of tears, and stole around the doctor's mansion, on her way to the double gates.

Here there were no trees to screen her. The grounds consisted on this side of an open, grassy lawn, unshaded by tree or shrub, and at this moment bathed in the pale glow of a light that streamed from the doctor's study windows.

Dora hesitated to cross this line of light, and looked earnestly, to see if her presence or movements were likely to be observed by any occupant of the dwelling.

The windows of the study—long French ones, opening like doors—were not only uncurtained, but partially open, to admit the soft night breeze. Dora could see the tall solar lamp on the central table, surrounded by piles of books, and the empty easy-chair close at hand, as if the doctor had just risen from his night study.

"I see no one," thought the girl. "He may have gone into another room. Now is my time. If he sees me, he will give me up to these people who claim to be my parents. Ah, there he is!"

She shrank back into the shadow of a laburnum-tree, as she beheld a man's figure slowly cross the floor of the study, his arms folded behind him, his head drooping low on his breast.

It was Sir Graham Gallagher himself whom Dora beheld, and she instinctively comprehended the fact.

He was a tall patriarchal looking gentleman—this famous court physician—with a long white beard and a crown of snowy hair that fell almost to his shoulders.

Dora was watching him with shy, wild eyes, wondering if she would ever dare to cross the lighted space before his very eyes, when a quick and heavy tramp down the garden paths, and a voice calling her in threatening tones, and steadily approaching her covert, startled and electrified her.

A deadly faintness seized the girl.

It seemed to her that all was lost. Yet, with the instinct of the hunted hare, she sprang forward, darted into the lighted space before the study windows, and then the faintness swept over her again in one restless wave.

With a wild moan, she threw up her arms, and fell unconscious on the sward.

Sir Graham Gallagher heard her piteous cry—it roused him from his thoughtful trance. He started, and looked from the window. His glance fell upon the prostrate figure on his lawn.

Without pausing to consider, he hurried out, gathered the helpless form into his arms, and carried her into his study, laying her upon a lounge.

Then he went back to the window.

Mrs. Narr was not yet in sight, but her menacing tones were echoing through his garden.

Dimly comprehending that something was wrong, and that the owner of the threatening voice was not friendly to this young girl, he closed the windows and let fall the shrouding curtains of heavy silk, so that no light from the room could stray without.

He then returned to Dora's side.

She was lying on the couch as he had left her, her little head against a crimson cushion, her pale, pale face looking as if sculptured from marble. How lovely she was in her supreme unconsciousness!—the glowing eyes veiled, the soft, round cheeks white as a snow-drift, the exquisite lips just parted, and the shadow of a great grief yet lingering on her wide, white brow.

The heart of the old doctor warmed towards her.

"Poor little thing!" he muttered, his eyes beaming with a kindly expression upon her. "She looks as if she were in deep trouble."

He brought from a small side-table a carafe of water and sprinkled her face.

Then, as she did not revive, he felt her pulse.

As he did so, the sleeve which Wamer had torn fell back from the white and daintily-rounded arm, exposing its clear above the elbow.

The eyes of the court physician dilated as they rested upon the exposed arm. The little irregular cross—Dora's birth-mark—gleamed out slender and vividly scarlet from the snowy, marble-like flesh, as if embossed upon it.

Sir Graham stooped eagerly, with a swift, swooping movement, his countenance changing.

"Strange!" he muttered, examining the mark. "I never saw but one birth-mark like that; and that was on the arm of Lord Champney's child. I remember it distinctly—the more especially as I had a letter from his lordship yesterday, asking me to look at a picture he is getting up of his dead child as a present to his wife, and desiring me to recall all that I can of the child's tiny features. And here comes along a young lady with that child's very birth-mark! Strange! strange!"

He dropped the arm softly, and applied himself more earnestly to the girl's restoration.

His efforts were soon rewarded. There was a faint quiver of the dainty figure, as if a sensation of cold had seized her, then a low gasping cry, and Dora opened wide her glorious eyes, and fixed them in an expression of alarm and wonder on the patriarchal face at her side.

"Do not be afraid, my dear," said the doctor, kindly, reading her terror. "I am Sir Graham Gallagher. You fainted in front of my windows, and I saw you and brought you in. I have not had time to call up Lady Gallagher, or any of my family, but I will do so at once."

"No—no!" exclaimed Dora, starting up. "Don't call any one. I must go. Oh—"

She sank back again on the lounge, a piteous appeal in her glowing eyes, as Mrs. Narr's shrill, threatening call rang past the windows, and the heavy, bounding tread of the woman was heard hastening towards the doctor's gates.

"No one shall harm you," Sir Graham said, gently. "You are safe here, my dear child. Who is this woman who is searching for you, and of whom you are in such fear?"

"She claims to be my mother," said Dora, bitterly. "I have just fled from her house—"

The doctor's face grew grave. His gentle, kindly eyes looked at Dora with a changed expression.

"My dear young lady," he said, gravely, "have you not acted rashly and wrongly? I have the greatest respect for the claims of a parent. I am a father and a grandfather. I know the hot-headedness of youth—its tendency to rebellion against authority—and I know that parents are often harsh and severe. But better the too rigid authority of stern parents than no guidance at all. If the woman out in my garden, calling for you, is your mother, I shall be compelled to give you up to her. You are too young to cut loose from home and parents."

He moved towards one of the windows, to put his resolve into execution.

Dora sprang towards him, with a gesture of passionate entreaty.

"Wait!" she pleaded. "Hear my story. Then, if you choose to give me up to my enemies, you can do so. We live at the Black Cottage behind your garden, and you can return me to it at any time. Only, for the love of Heaven, hear me first!"

Sir Graham paused, with his hand on the curtain, and hesitated.

By this time Mrs. Narr's voice had passed out of hearing. The woman had emerged into the street, and was hurrying up and down in a frantic search for the missing girl.

"I will hear what you have to say," said Sir Graham. "I know that a family had moved into the Black Cottage, but I did not suppose it to be a gentleman's family," he added.

It was evident that the gentle tones of Dora, her patrician ways, and well-bred manner, had convinced the good old doctor that she, at least, was a lady.

"Nor is it, as the world ranks a gentleman," responded Dora. "Nor is it, in any sense. These people, who claim to be my parents, are scheming, hard-hearted persons, who love liquor better than anything else, and who would sell me to my ruin. I have not been brought up by them. Until a few weeks since, I have lived all my life, from my earliest remembrance, with a noble old Sussex squire, whom I believed to be my father in truth, as he was in tenderness and love."

Her lips quivered. Her eyes flooded with tears. The memory of that ragged, kindly face, that had never looked upon her save in love, shook her soul to its bitterest depths.

"He died," she said, brokenly—"poor papa! And with his death my troubles came. These people claimed me. And he, whom I had been taught to consider my brother, gave me up to them, to be rid of the burden of my support. The woman took me to London, where the man joined her. And since then my life has been made a burden to me."

She went on to tell of Wamer's insult to her, of her flight, of the young Mr. Weil's delicate kindness, and constant friendship, of her re-capture, and transportation to the Black Cottage at Chiswick, and, finally, of the occurrences of the present night and the circumstances of her escape.

Throughout the story she had mentioned no names, and had spoken in a tone of moderation and sincerity that attested her truthfulness.

Sir Graham, his hand still on the curtain, listened gravely, his gentle eyes searching her pale and sorrowful face.

"A strange story!" he observed, at last, when the trembling, passionate young voice had ceased to thrill through his study, and the lovely head bowed itself on the heaving young breast in an attitude of utter hopelessness. "A strange story, my dear young lady, but I believe it to the smallest detail. You have had a hard and bitter experience. It does not seem possible that these people can be your parents. They show no evidence of parental affection. Yet such cases are not unusual. You have been brought up away from them, and in a different rank of life, and these facts may alienate their affection from you. Your education has put a wide gulf between you and them. While I say," he added, "that it doesn't seem possible that these people are your parents, don't think me so romantic as to believe them false pretenders and impostors. I believe you to be really their daughter!"

"I am not—I am not!" cried Dora, a passionate thrill in her young voice. "There is something within me—I call it instinct—that tells me I am not of their blood. There is a barrier between them and me stronger than education and years of estrangement. My lips have never pressed that woman's cheek! My heart has never warmed towards her. Instead of that, my whole soul revolts against her claims upon me!"

"Strange!" muttered the doctor. "I don't know what to make of this."

Dora's face grew eager and impassioned. Her eyes glowed like stars, their brows depths seeming translucent.

"Not only do I turn from that woman who claims

to be my mother," she said, lowly and eagerly, "but I cherish dreams of what my own mother was, or might have been. My mother! Oh, she was good, and tender, and kind, with a great heart, and a noble soul—my unknown mother! And if I never know her here, I shall see her face to face by-and-bye in the hereafter. She may have been poor, and lowly, and ignorant—it is possible—but there was that in her that could call forth my tenderest love and reverence. This woman of the Black Cottage my mother! Oh, no, no!"

There was something in the pale, passionate young face that stirred the chords of Sir Graham's memory.

"You look now like a lady I know looked in her youth," he said, his thoughts reverting to the Lady Barbara Champney. "She is as white and fair as a lily, and her hair is of pale gold; yet somehow, you, with your dark hair and bright brown eyes and clear brunette skin, remind me of her. I cannot analyse the resemblance, but it is there."

Dora did not answer. She was listening for the possible return of Mrs. Narr.

A sound, as of some one cautiously opening the gates, broke the stillness.

"You will not give me up?" panted Dora, in returning alarm. "You will not let that woman take me away?"

The doctor listened.

There was surely some one on the gravelled path. "Not yet," he said kindly. "I am too much interested in you to lose sight of you so soon. The intentions of these people against you, and their collusion with this false lover of yours, cause me to waver in my resolve to give you up to them. You have not yet told me your name. What am I to call you?"

"Dora Chessom. It was the name papa gave me—poor papa who is dead!"

"I understand. It was given you by your adopted father—the Sussex squire?"

Dora assented.

"And this noble young fellow who loves you in your adversity as in your prosperity—who is he?"

"He is Noel Weir. They call him the young squire down in Sussex, where he is known."

"And those people who claim to be your parents—who are they?"

"They were formerly tenants of a farm in Surrey," replied Dora. "They left it in consequence of the man's committing a forgery. Their name is Narr."

The doctor started, his face full of amazement.

"What!" he exclaimed, in sudden excitement. "What are their names?"

Dora shrunk back a little. The doctor's manner startled her with a vague alarm.

"Their name is Narr," she repeated. "He is called Jack Narr—she Catharine Narr."

"Great Heaven!" ejaculated the doctor. "Narr! Narr? Why, this is incredible!"

He dropped the curtain, and walked back and forth in an irrespressible excitement.

"They are the same!" he ejaculated. "The name—the fact of the forgery—Stacy, Miss Dora!" he cried, interrupting himself. "Do you know the woman's maiden name?"

"Yes, sir. I have heard her say that her name was Artress—Catharine Artress."

The doctor uttered a stifled ejaculation, of which Dora failed to comprehend the purport. Then he took another hasty turn or two about the room, his excitement seeming to increase with each moment.

Suddenly he paused and regarded the girl yet more closely.

Her graceful, slender figure, the dainty poise of her head, the exquisite beauty of her face, the intellect enthroned on her broad brow, the soul in her glorious eyes—he marked all these with the look of one weighing so many items of evidence.

"She the daughter of Catharine Artress?" he said to himself. "No wonder she can't believe it. The thing's an impossibility. Figs do not grow on thistle shrubs! A lily does not blossom on a weed stalk! The girl is not theirs. Who then does she belong to?"

He took another hasty turn to and fro.

"The birth-mark—the red cross!" he then resumed, in an agitated whisper, regardless of the girl's presence. "The floating resemblance! I see it all! There has been a terrible fraud committed! an awful wrong done!"

His face paled with emotion. His questionings of the young girl had convinced him of her identity with the child Lord and Lady Champney believed to be buried in their family vault, and whom they had so long mourned as dead.

Dora had been watching him with a fascinated gaze. Now, that slow and cautious tread in the doctor's garden held her breathless and silent. She was waiting to hear Mrs. Narr call her again.

The doctor roused himself and looked at her.

"I shall not give you up to the Narrs, Miss Dora," he said, his heart melting within him at sight of her pale, wistful countenance. "I am in great mental distress. I have just received a terrible shock. I will call up Lady Gallagher, and we will then discuss the situation."

He left the room hastily.

At the same moment Dora heard a low voice, freighted with anxiety, calling softly in the garden:

"Dora! Dora! Where are you?"

The voice was that of Noel Weir.

Flushing all over with excitement, Dora impulsively pulled up the curtain and opened the window, stepping out on the lawn, in the full glow of the light from the study lamp.

The sound recalled Mr. Weir, who was in the act of plunging into the shadows of the lower garden.

With a cry of joy, he ran towards her.

"Oh, Dora!" he ejaculated; "I thought I had lost you, although I knew you could not have left this garden. The Narrs and Wamer have gone up towards the railway-station in search of you. I have got a boat down by the river. If we hasten we may escape. Come, Dora!"

He did not wait for her to explain the circumstances of her meeting with Sir Graham, but hurried her away towards the river. And so when, five minutes later, Sir Graham and Lady Gallagher entered the study, eager and excited over the doctor's great discovery, they found the window open, and saw that Dora had vanished.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

AN experimental practice with the Montigny mitrailleuse took place a short time since at Shoeburyness. With deliberate firing at 400 yards, out of a total of 185 bullets thrown, 177 hit the target, leaving only eight to be accounted for. The results at present show for this mitrailleuse a much larger percentage of effective shots per number fired, but the destructive effects of case from the field guns are much superior. This weapon is not identical with the French mitrailleuse.

THE SPEED OF METEORS.—The suddenness with which a shooting star appears, the short duration of its visibility, and the necessity of noting very accurately its apparent path among the stars, all tend to make the determination of the actual number of seconds occupied by the meteor in swooping athwart the heavens a matter of extreme difficulty. Yet observations have been made, which indicate a velocity far greater than that which would be found in the case of meteors travelling in a nearly circular path round the sun. We know what that velocity would be; a body at the same mean distance from the sun as our earth, would travel with the same mean velocity, or at the rate of some 18 miles in a second. Such a body coming full tilt against the earth would traverse our atmosphere at the rate of 36 miles per second. But, as a matter of fact, it was found that some meteors travelled at a rate considerably exceeding this, even, too, when they were not directly encountering the earth.

PHOTOGRAPHING THE SUN.—Professor Winlock is now engaged in photographing the sun on a plan which, so far as we know, has not before been put into practice. He uses a single lens object glass, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter, 40 feet focal length, of crown glass, made by Clark, and corrected for spherical aberration by means of an artificial star of homogeneous (sodium) light in the focus of a 5-inch collimator. The image of the sun is $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. The tube of the telescope points to the north, and the image of the sun is thrown in by means of a reflector of plate glass. This glass is not roughened or blackened on one side, because when that was done the heat of the sun distorted the plane surface. The slit is at the object-glass end of the telescope, and that position has the advantage that when it is thrown across no dust is shaken down on to the plate, as is apt to happen in the usual way of working. It is Mr. Winlock's intention to photograph the sun every fair day now. It seems also probable that this mode of photographing might be of advantage for the partial phases of an eclipse.

EUROPEAN MINERS.—The gross number of miners in the whole of Europe amounts to 1,275,000; of which there are in Great Britain 863,000; France, 206,500; Prussia, 184,800; Austria, 125,900; Belgium, 111,500; Russia, 80,000; Spain, 73,600; Italy, 56,000; Sweden and Norway, 29,000; Saxony, 23,900; Bavaria, 11,200; Switzerland, 5,100; Portugal, 4,200; Wurtemberg, 2,200; Baden, 2,100; Greece, 800; Netherlands, 800; and Denmark, 300. Reckoning the relatives of the miners and the furnace-men, the population which derives its living from mining amounts to 2,955,000 persons; of these

there are distributed in Great Britain 90,000 persons; France, 503,000; Prussia, 523,000; Austria, 260,000; Belgium, 218,000; Russia, 180,000; Spain, 167,000; Italy, 75,000; Sweden and Norway, 75,000; Saxony, 56,000; Bavaria, 24,000; Portugal, 9,000; Switzerland, 10,000; and the rest of Europe, 30,000 persons. The mining population of Europe, therefore, forms one per cent. of the whole.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF ITALY.—We learn from the last report of the Geological Survey of Italy (R. Comitato Geologico) that that body will publish a geological map of Italy on the scale of 1 to 600,000 during the course of next year. The map is that which was compiled by Professor I. Cocchi in 1867, and sent to the Universal Exhibition in Paris. It was a hand-coloured map, the Ordnance map of Upper and Central Italy in six sheets being used as a basis. In compiling this map Professor Cocchi made use of all the published and unpublished materials that he could find. The most southern provinces of the peninsula and Sicily were not, however, represented, for although notes and papers on their geology were not wanting, that part of the kingdom had not been mapped geologically. The new map will be divided into four sheets, and new plates will be engraved copying the topography of the Ordnance map, and introducing such modifications and improvements as may be deemed necessary for the new object to which the map is to be applied. The colouring will be done by chromolithography. Accompanying the map there will be a short descriptive memoir and two geological sections, one along the length and the other across the breadth of the country.

KENT ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

THE annual dinner took place recently at the Corn Exchange, Sittingbourne, under the presidency of Earl Amherst, after which a paper was read by the Rev. A. J. Pearman on the two earthworks known as Bayford Castle and Castle Rough, the first being an entrenchment made by Alfred the Great, and the latter the site of a fortification built by the Danes under Hastings in 893. Both places are of the same date. The Rev. F. Hazlewood also read a paper "On Some Paintings lately discovered in Marsden Church."

The members re-assembled at Sittingbourne, and took train to Queenborough, in the Isle of Sheppey, whence they made an interesting excursion about the island, visiting several ancient churches and the remains of two once-famous castles. The island was in olden times an important grazing-place for sheep, whence it derives its name. Many of the inhabitants used to call these valuable animals "sheps," and a sheepdog was known as a sheppye.

The first object of interest was the site of the ancient Castle of Sheppey, situate at the western mouth of the Swale, very near the present railway station at Queenborough.

On arriving there, the Rev. R. Bingham read a paper "On the History of this Castle."

Several curious mounds, in the middle of flat tracts of marsh-land, were inspected, and it is supposed that they were artificially raised for a refuge for the sheep in the event of floods. They are known as cottrelles or cotrols.

After a very pleasant ride through a rich agricultural portion of the island, the party arrived at Minster, which is the largest parish in Sheppey.

The Rev. Dr. Willis, the vicar of the church which was visited, read some extracts relating to the history of the ancient minster or monastery. Minster Church stands on rising ground, about three miles from Sheerness, and commands from its tower a grand view over the Isle of Sheppey, the Nore, the Essex coast, and the hills of Kent.

The members paid short visits to Eastchurch and Shurland Castle, and returned to Sittingbourne much pleased with their day's trip.

A small party of the members visited the ancient town of Milton, which consists of a number of small streets intersecting each other at right angles. The church, which is some distance from the town, and is supposed to have been destroyed by Earl Godwin, stood adjoining the ancient town, which was nearer the Swale than the present one.

A museum of Roman pottery, coins, and other ancient relics, was opened during the two days at the Literary Institute for the inspection of the members.

THE Duke of Manchester has left for the seat of war. His grace will be allowed to remain at the Prussian head-quarters.

THE roofs of the nave and aisles of St. David's Cathedral are to be renewed. Further restorations, as originally proposed, have been postponed.

THE Empress assumed the duties of Regent on the 28th ult., and presided at a Council of Ministers in the afternoon.



[PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES.]

PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES OF PRUSSIA.

PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES would seem to be destined to achieve a high military reputation, and to leave behind him a name second to none on the list of great Prussian generals. Wherever he has commanded an army, whether, as in 1864, against the Danes, against the Austrians in 1866, or, as in the present war, against the French, victory has followed the standard of Prussia. Indeed there seems to be no modern military parallel for the good fortune of Prince Frederick Charles in his campaigns, except it be the "wonderful luck" of his cousin "Fritz," to use the homely phrase of the King of Prussia.

Prince Frederick Charles is the eldest son of Prince Charles, second brother of the king. He was born in 1828, has from youth devoted himself to the military profession, is a general of cavalry, and holds a number of high appointments. His first experiences of war were earned in 1848, in Schleswig; in 1849 he served as major on the staff of his uncle, the present king, during the Baden campaign. At the battle of Wiesensthal he was severely wounded in the arm and shoulder, and his adjutant, Von Busche-Münich, killed. In this battle he distinguished himself by a charge at the head of eighty-seven hussars of the 9th Regiment against 400 Baden infantry. After this campaign he returned home, and continued his studies at Bonn, under the surveillance of General von Roon, the present Minister for War. He commanded in the war against Denmark in 1864, after the departure of Count von Wrangel, and especially distinguished himself at the bombardment of the Düppel forts.

In 1866 Prince Frederick Charles was placed at the head of the First Army, destined to operate against Austria. With remarkable celerity he carried his army through Saxony into Bohemia; and burst so suddenly upon the Austrians, as to

quite confound the plans of their greatest strategist and general, Benedek. A few actions were rapidly fought, until the Austrians made a determined stand at Sadown (or Königgrätz), in which the Prussians won a complete victory, and the military power of Austria was entirely shattered. The triumph of the Prussian arms at Königgrätz was largely attributable to the assistance which Prince Frederick Charles received by being reinforced in the nick of time by the *corps d'armées* under the command of his cousin Prince Frederick William, who had made some astonishing forced marches in order to reach the scene of conflict in time. Both these Prussian commanders appear to be thoroughly aware of the importance of the first Napoleon's maxim, *Frappez fort et frappez vite*; and nobody can deny that they have given proof that they each know how to strike quickly and strike heavily.

Like his kinsman, Prince Frederick Charles is idolized by his soldiers; he makes himself perfectly familiar with them, under every circumstance—on the line of march, in the camp, and in the hospital—going from man to man, inquiring minutely into everything that affects their welfare, and leaving nothing undone in order to secure it. This is the secret, no doubt, of the astonishing legerity which has characterized the movements of the German troops in the present day. The men are thoroughly well cared for, therefore they march willingly, and they fight well.

At the period at which we write, the following affords a correct statement of the composition and strength of the three great armies of Prussia advancing into France:—The First Army—otherwise styled the Army of the Saar—is under the command of General von Steinmetz, and consists of the 7th, or Westphalian, and the 8th, or Rhenish Corps, with the 9th, or Brandenburg, Division of Cavalry. The total strength of its 50 battalions and 48 squadrons—to which are joined 31 batteries of field artillery, numbering 186 guns—is about 70,000 men. The two

other armies, however, are of much greater strength. The Second, or Army of the Rhine, commanded by Prince Frederick Charles, whose portrait we give on this page, and forming the centre of the Prussian line, numbers no fewer than 250,000 men, embracing the 1st (East Prussian) Corps, the 2nd (Pomeranian) Corps, the 3rd (Brandenburg) Corps, the 4th (Magdeburg and Thuringian) Corps, the 9th (Schleswig-Holstein) Corps, the 10th (Hanoverian) Corps, the 12th (Saxon) Corps, the Hesse-Darmstadt Division, General von Kummer's Infantry Division, which in time of peace forms the garrison of Mayence, and the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 10th, and 12th Cavalry Divisions. The whole army includes 197 battalions, 162 squadrons, and 110 batteries, or 660 guns; and its entire force, as we have said, is 250,000 men. The Crown Prince's army—the Third, or Army of the South—is of about the same strength. It comprises the Corps of the Guards—some of whose regiments suffered so terribly at Weissenburg; the 5th (Posen) Corps; the 6th (Silesian) Corps; the 11th (Hesse and Nassau) Corps; the 6th Cavalry Division; the Wurtemberg, Baden, and Bavarian contingents—in all 192 battalions, 164 squadrons, 110 batteries; or 250,000 men, with 660 guns. The total strength of the three German armies now on the soil of France is therefore 570,000 men, with 1,506 pieces of artillery. Behind these enormous arrays of armed men—which outnumber by two to one any possible forces that France can place in the field—are the vast forces of the Prussian reserves, which are pressing up in second line. To beat these prodigious hosts of invaders out of France, and roll back the tide of war upon German soil, will be a Titanic task, and would require the military genius of the first great Emperor himself, with all his proverbial good fortune to boot. Will the Emperor Napoleon III. be able to accomplish it?—Nothing less can save his dynasty.

We are informed, on good authority, that the whole of the Orleans family have left this country for the Continent. It is supposed that Belgium or Switzerland is their destination.

The death is announced of the Baroness Wenman, of Thame Park, Oxfordshire, whose family is said to have descended from William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, the founder of Winchester College, and New College, Oxford.

DIAGNOSIS BETWEEN REAL AND APPARENT DEATH.—Dr. Laborde, in a paper recently read by him before the Academy of Medicine in Paris, has endeavoured to show that the effect produced on a bright steel needle inserted into the body indicates whether death has or has not occurred. When life is present, he says, the needle, generally very soon, becomes more or less tarnished by oxidation; when, on the other hand, death has taken place, the needle, even at the end of half an hour or an hour, will retain its brightness. M. Laborde believes that, in the first instance, the occurrence of oxidation, with its attendant electric phenomena, indicates that death is only apparent; while, in the second, the complete absence of oxidation is a sign of real death. The communication has been referred to a committee, consisting of MM. Gavarret, Bédard, and Vulpian.

PUBLIC WORKS IN TURKEY.—The war has very materially altered the bright aspects of public works in Turkey, which provided some employment for the people. The whole of the money has, however, been secured for the Roumelian Railway system, the surveys for which are being pushed on in various directions under Austrian auspices. The only work going on is on the small sections near Constantinople started last year. The Anatolian project, or that from Constantinople to Bagdad, which might have been taken in hand, appears again in abeyance, until the political necessities of England with regard to India should induce a collateral guarantee to be given. The Varna Railway, which would have profited by its new connection with the European railways, is interfered with by the war trains in the west. The extensions of the Smyrna railways are again affected. The Cassaba extensions, which appeared provided for, must probably wait. A short branch of the Smyrna and Aidin Railway to Boojah, of about a mile and a half, is now ready for opening. It will be remunerative. The Smyrna and Salonika quays are proceeding, the latter under the direction of Mr. Rocavitalis, architect, of Smyrna. There is no need of the new Varna harbour, but it may be pushed forward on account of the war. The Smyrna Gasworks are again lighting the public streets, but nothing is announced yet as to the extension of the Constantinople Gasworks. The rebuilding of Pera occupies the local building interest. The Tramway Company for Pera has, we learn, received its rails, and the whole of the ironwork for the new floating bridge over the Golden Horn has come from France, but the pontoons made in the arsenal are insufficient.



[THE QUARREL.]

FIFTEEN THOUSAND POUNDS. DEAD OR ALIVE!

CHAPTER VII.

Here was the matter of my fate in me
When I was fashioned first, and given such life
As goes with a sad end.
Yea, and for all this I am not penitent;
You see I am perfect in those sins of mine.

Chastelard.

RENFREW was as brave as he was cunning, and he was as cunning as he was merciless. There were many reasons why he hated Childeric Storme, and all of them started up in his brain as he pressed the trigger of his weapon, the muzzle of which was at that moment within three feet of Captain Storme's head.

In his eagerness to slay the sailor, Renfrew had omitted to cock his pistol, and ere the neglect could be remedied the former's hand was on his throat, and he felt himself hurled to the floor as if by the hand of a giant.

"Dog! hound! Have you really tried to kill me!" cried Storme, as he put his foot upon the breast of the prostrate man and glared down at him, knife in hand. "Then prepare to be killed by me!"

"Do not murder me!" gasped Renfrew, almost breathless, under the fierce pressure of that inexorable foot, and greatly bristled by his violent fall. "Mercy, cousin Childeric."

"Cousin Childeric, indeed, traitorous cur! Would it be murder to crush a false-hearted villain named Mark Renfrew?"

David Sanders was helpless to aid (if he had any desire) the fallen man. Beside, the awful wrath blazing in the face of Captain Storme appalled the old man.

The boy, more bold, was about to spring between his father and the object of his wrath; but a fiery—"Stand back, boy!" sharp and terrific, made the lad shrink.

There were times when even he dared not attempt to stem the torrent of his father's violence. And this was one of them.

The life of Mark Renfrew hung upon a mere throb of the furious man's heart.

"Mark Renfrew," whispered Storme, with his foot still rigid and merciless upon the man's breast, "do you know why I prayed for this moment—the moment when I stand upon you thus?"

"I—I never have raised my hand against you, cousin Childeric," gasped Renfrew, as he gazed up into the terrible face then bending over him. "Only just now—and then it was against the outlaw, and not against the son of my mother's sister."

"No murder—do no murder!" said David, trembling in his chair. "No murder, son of Evelina Storme! Let him rise."

"Not yet, not yet! Oh, David Sanders, for years this man—this wolf, has held my heart in his fangs as my heel holds him now. This is my dear cousin, Mark Renfrew, who beguiled my headstrong youth—persuaded me to folly, and would have enticed me to commit foul crimes. All that is developed of baseness and badness in me now I owe to him. Mark Renfrew, where is my wife?"

"Your wife? I—I know nothing of your wife," stammered Renfrew, but with a sudden chill at his heart.

"His wife?" thought David. "Does he mean the mother of his children? I heard him say she was dead."

"Mark Renfrew," continued Storme, "because I am not sure that you have spoken falsely in saying you know nothing of my wife, I spare you. But do not feel secure, for I am on the trail of those who robbed me of my wife. I am in their wake, and it is the aim of my life to run them down; and if, as I suspect, you were one of them, by my hand you shall die."

"I know nothing of your wife—never knew that you had a wife—only suspected that you were the outlaw Storme, because the name was also yours. I swear it."

"Even as it is—even if you have not aided in robbing me of my wife," said Storme, "I do know that you are eager to see me dead. Why should I spare you?"

"Father," said the boy, now advancing boldly, "spare him, because you have never shed blood except in self-defence."

"I would be in self-defence now, Chil'ric. Ah, my boy! you do not know—you could not appreciate did you know—the injury I have suffered, and I suspect from this man's enmity. But you are right, always right, Chil'ric. I have never murdered a man, and men would call this a murder, and the stain would ever rest upon you and Orie. Get up, Mark Renfrew; but speak in whispers, and sit there at that table. Try to procure aid, even by a wink of your eye, and as I am a living man, the moment after I will slay you. Take that seat. You shall not leave this room, nor be beyond my reach, until justice has been done to me and mine in the matter of my mother's property. Sit down there!"

Mark Renfrew was no craven-hearted man, but a very prudent one. Could he have seen a single fair chance for escape or successful resistance, he would, bruised as he was, have fought desperately to secure it. He knew that he was a strong and active man, but the ease with which Captain Storme had hurled

him to the floor had told him that his enemy was far his superior in prowess. He recognised that he was in the power of a desperate man, who seemed careless, reckless of the hot pursuit everywhere being made to capture or kill him. So he sat in the chair and faced his hated cousin with a pale but haughty face.

"You came here, Mark Renfrew, to see David Sanders. Your business now is with me as Childeric Storme. You may have business with me at some not distant day as Captain —, but I will not speak of that now. You may know what I mean. If you are guilty you are sick at heart, though your treacherous face can deceive. I know you well. Now, in the presence of Mr. David Sanders, you recognise me as Childeric Storme, lawful heir of Evelina Storme. You, Mr. Sanders, are familiar with all the terms and forms of law. Listen."

He whispered rapidly in the ear of the old man, who produced at once writing materials from his pocket and began to write.

"How long am I to be kept a prisoner?" asked Renfrew, with a glance over his shoulder at Storme.

"Patience. Not long," was the stern reply.

David Sanders, quick with the pen, soon completed his writing, and read it aloud.

"And I am to sign that?" demanded Renfrew.

"You are to sign that."

"A full resignation of all my claim to inherit the Storme estate! I will not."

"You will in less than three minutes," said Storme, as he placed a cocked pistol against his captive's temple. "I am no jester. You are nearer death than you ever were in all your life, Mark Renfrew—nearer than when I drew you half dead from Ullsburgh lake years ago. Ha! a fine requital you made me for saving your life then! Sign or die!"

Renfrew muttered a curse and signed.

"Do not swear yet," said Storme, as he glanced sharply at the signature. "You will be called upon to swear presently. I am ready and willing to put a ball through your head though I die the instant after. I am about to send for a magistrate."

"Ah! a magistrate!"

"A justice of the peace and two witnesses."

"I have no objection," said Renfrew, his eyes sparkling.

"And I shall require you to swear to this signature in the presence of the magistrate, and he shall affix his official certificate to this document. But do not think that I fear you can betray me. I do not think you are ready to die, Mark Renfrew. But, should any act on your part, even the slightest twinkle of your eyelid, lead me to think otherwise, I shall kill you instantly. I would kill you as

quickly and recklessly as I would crush a scorpion."

Renfrew gazed searchingly at the stern face of the speaker, and saw that a desire to slay him flamed in his eyes. He had not forgotten the iron will, the fierce spirit, the dauntless courage that had made the boyhood of Childeric Storme a wonder, and he knew that such characteristics could only have been intensified in the career he had since followed.

"Mr. Sanders," said Storme, "you are well acquainted with the people of this place. Will you please find and conduct to us a justice of the peace?"

David glanced anxiously at Mark Renfrew, who sat motionless, his brow knitted, his thin lips compressed, his dark eyes half-veiled by his downcast gaze at the floor.

"He is plotting. He is a dangerous man," whispered David. "He is cunning, brave, strong, and active."

"I am," replied Storme, aloud, "I am ready to measure cunning, bravery, strength and activity with him, as I have successfully done for years with others like him. Besides, Mark Renfrew loves life. I care little for it. Perhaps he knows why. Perhaps he has made me care little for life. He knows me. Call a magistrate—but stop! For you to do so might make you my accomplice. They would denounce you for not betraying me out there."

"That is very true," replied David, resuming his seat.

"Yes, you would surely be accused and arrested. You did not know you were to meet the smuggler Storme when you entered this room. The smuggler Storme does not permit you to leave it. Name some magistrate."

"There was one in the bar-parlour when I left it. He is called Squire Vapor."

"Good; my lad, go ask the landlady, too, to come hither immediately, with Mr. Vapor, in an affair of importance. You may be as speedy as you can."

The boy unlocked one of the doors and hurried away.

Storme then placed himself immediately behind Renfrew, the latter seated and facing the table, and thus fronting the door by which the magistrate was expected to enter.

Storme stood with his left hand resting on Renfrew's shoulder. His other hand could not be seen by any one standing before the table.

"Mark Renfrew," he said, in a threatening tone, "they say you are cunning. So am I. I am more—for I am a desperate man. I have my left hand on your shoulder—you feel the grip of my fingers. In my other hand I hold a cocked pistol—you feel its muzzle as I press it against your back. If I press the trigger I shall blow your backbone to atoms."

Renfrew, brave as he undoubtedly was, shuddered under the desperate calmness of this reckless man.

"Remember! If I suspect—if I simply suspect betrayal from you, I shatter your spine on the instant. If you hesitate to obey—you die. The eyes of my son will be fixed upon your face. He is vigilant, and swift as lightning to defend, to avenge me. My eyes shall be on the faces of those who front us. If I see the slightest recognition of the truth in their faces—you die. My ears shall be attentive to my son. If he utters a cry, if he even coughs, ever so slightly—you die. They say you are a strong man. So am I. I prove it."

As he spoke the last words, he closed his iron fingers upon the shuddering shoulder he grasped.

Renfrew involuntarily uttered a cry of pain. He feared his shoulder was dislocated. The grip of Childeric Storme was as strong as the jaws of a lion.

"That is a hint," continued Storme. "You will not have much to say. You will have little to do. The affair will soon be over—especially if you hesitate to obey. You now understand your position. Now, if you like, try to devise a way to bring arrest upon me, without bringing sudden death upon yourself."

Storme ceased to speak, and the silence remained unbroken, save by Renfrew's short and tremulous breathing.

"He is, as he says, desperate," thought Renfrew. "He is mad! I am in the clutch of a madman! Only a madman would dare the peril he is challenging. If the boy coughs I am to die. What if the lad coughs accidentally? Oh Heaven, save me! Deliver me from this peril, and I swear to be a better man than I have been, I will become a good and holy man. Save me, deliver me, and I will live to undo all the evil I have done! Deliver me, and, if possible, I will restore his lost wife to this man! Ah! she is dead!"

Bathed in a dew of terror, Mark Renfrew awaited the return of the boy, whose very breathing might be believed to be a cough by the suspicious Storme, and the slightest exclamation of whom was to hurl death upon Mark Renfrew.

Childeric soon returned, and several paces in advance of persons whose footsteps could be heard coming through the passage behind him.

As the boy entered he clapped his hands violently together, and coughed.

"Heaven have mercy! I am a dead man!" mentally exclaimed Renfrew, who imagined his hour had come.

"So!" thought Storme, as he recognised these signals of imminent danger near at hand. "There are revenue officers coming with the magistrate."

He cast a quick glance towards the other door, and his son glided to it instantly, placed his back against it, his hands behind him, and fixed his steady, vigilant eyes upon the face of Mark Renfrew.

Renfrew shuddered as he met that intelligent stare, and a kind of stupor seemed to chain his mind.

In a moment after Dame Boxy waddled into the room, followed by the tapster and an elderly simple-looking country gentleman.

"How his eyes glare. He must be the man," thought Putnutter, as he hung in the rear, behind the expansive shoulders of Dame Boxy. "I ben't ready to take the risk—no, not even for fifteen thousand pounds twice told."

"Squire Vapor, Mr. Clyde; Mr. Clyde, Squire Vapor," said the dame, with an elephantine courtesy.

"I think there are others in the hall, Dame Boxy," replied Storme, carelessly.

"Two officers of the coast guard, Mr. Clyde, who have just arrived, and who say they must see every man, young or old, now in the 'Pip and Pitcher,' as they has a suspicion that the great outlaw, Captain Storme, may be here in disguise. I told them I had a good pair of eyes as any detective in or out of London."

"So you have, Dame Boxy."

"And that I'd recognise Captain Storme in any disguise, after that description."

"Very true, Dame Boxy."

The dame was evidently in a fume and fret of offended dignity at the demand that had been made to search her inn. She snorted with wrath. Her fat face was as red as a beet.

Her nose was up in the air, and her bosom heaved like bounding billows—or pillows.

"I vowed to the fellows with the gold-laced caps that they should not intrude upon my guests without the consent of my guests, especially you, Mr. Clyde."

The dame was armed with an enormously long kitchen spit, which she brandished out in the passage, while her huge person completely filled the doorway.

"Oh, let them come in, dear Dame Boxy," said Storme, with well-feigned eagerness. "I need two reliable witnesses to a small affair of business between me and Colonel Mark Renfrew."

Dame Boxy stood aside, and the officers of the coastguard, well armed, came in a pace or two.

"I am glad to see you, gentlemen," said Storme, eyeing them boldly. "But Captain Storme is dead. Colonel Mark Renfrew will tell you that."

The sharp thrust of the unseen pistol against his back warned Renfrew.

"Captain Storme is dead," he said. "It is so published in the *Ulsterburgh Gazette*."

"As you may read in that paper," continued Storme.

David Sanders instantly placed the newspaper in the hands of one of the officers, and both drew aside to read it.

"You needed my services, I was told, Mr. Clyde," said Mr. Vapor, who was in a hurry to return to his bowl of punch, and a select party of toppers in the bar-parlour.

"Yes, if you please. Colonel Mark Renfrew—you are acquainted with him?"

"Certainly—greeted him as he passed through the 'public' a while ago. What is it? I am in the middle of a game of cribbage."

"Colonel Mark Renfrew wishes you to attest his signature here. Please read it."

"No, I have not my reading specs with me. I left them in the public. No matter—what is it?" asked Mr. Vapor, who was quite unsteady on his legs.

"He resigns all right to inherit the Storme estate—"

"Oh, that is a great name just now. Is this your signature, Colonel Renfrew?"

"It is," replied Renfrew, in a hollow voice, and yielding his will under the sudden sharp pressure upon his shoulder.

The necessary forms were completed in haste by the thirsty magistrate, who then hurried away, saying, as he departed:

"If anything more is needed, call on me in the morning, as I am heart and soul just now in my little game of cribbage."

"Just our luck," cried one of the officers. "The fellow is killed, and we lose all chance of reward, Jem."

"Yes; and so no harm is done by our sending all our force over towards Edgetown. You know you were afraid if we had the luck to find him here, you and I wouldn't be able to take him alive."

"Take him alive! Bah! I intended to shoot him down like a mad dog," said the other, with a bitter oath of chagrin. "How reads the reward? 'Fifteen Thousand Pounds! Dead or Alive! I'd been a fool to give more than one a chance to share in that; so I took care to send all our force over towards Edgetown, and that's twenty miles away. Poor devils! they are spurring like mad in that direction now.'"

"Yes; so let's go and take a cup of consolation, hot and strong, and then ride after our fellows."

So saying, the officers hurried away, followed by Dame Boxy and the tapster.

"It is over!" said David Sanders, drawing a long breath of relief.

"No!" exclaimed Storme, as he made a rapid gesture, meant for his son, who instantly looked the door leading into the passage. "As that tapster left, I saw him grin, and take the arm of one of the officers. He is a coward, and means to stipulate for the greater part of the reward before he speaks of his belief that I am Captain Storme. I saw that belief in his face. I am off. Mark Renfrew, I am going to seek the solution of that mystery which tortures my heart and brain; but you shall not see me go."

As he spoke, the smuggler dealt Renfrew a terrible blow on the head with the butt of his pistol, and Renfrew fell forward upon his face, as if dead.

"Great Heaven! you have killed him!" exclaimed David, aghast.

"No fear of that, David," said Storme, contemptuously. "He is only stunned. Take good care of that document, David. I leave my children in your care. Kiss me, Childeric! Heaven bless you! You know I am not the bad man they call me."

"Oh, father! let me go with you!" sobbed the boy, as Storme pressed him to his bosom.

"What! and leave little Orie to pine for us! No, be both father and brother to our darling Orie, my lad. We shall be united again."

Another embrace, and the desperate man fled from the room by the rear door, and in a moment after was out in the open air of the dark night.

"I fear Colonel Renfrew is dead," said David, staring wildly at the motionless form of the man on the floor. "Indeed I know not what to do. I think I must call in assistance."

"Not yet! not yet! Give my father all the chance we can! Say I threatened your life!" cried the daring boy, as with ready hand he drew a pistol and levelled it at the head of the old man.

"Aye, they'll not harm a lad like you for trying to aid his father. But there is no one here, pray turn that pistol aside, my boy!" said the timid old man. "And it is such a spirit as this I am to rear to manhood!" he added with a groan and a shudder.

But just then Renfrew opened his eyes, glared wildly around, and not seeing Storme, sprang to his feet like a madman in his rage.

"Where is he! Help! murder! The outlaw! Storme! Help! Boy, which way went your father?"

"I'd sooner put a ball through your head, aye, or through my own, Mark Renfrew, than tell you or any man," said Childeric, boldly.

At the same moment hasty footsteps were heard moving hurriedly in the passage without.

The pain of his hurt head made Mark Renfrew groan and stagger to a chair, in which he sank down heavily and weak.

"They are coming! Let them break in—for neither you nor I will open the door," said Childeric to the trembling old man.

"Help! murder! help! haste!" cried Renfrew, staggering to his feet again, and stepping wildly towards the door, for his confused brain deceived him into the belief that Storme was still in the room—certainly not far off. "Storme is here! Storme is here!"

CHAPTER VIII.

I give you all I can
For all this love of yours, and yet I am sure
I shall live out the sorrow of your death,
And be glad afterwards. *Steuernburg.*

BEFORE Mark Renfrew could reach the door it was broken in with a great crash, and the two officers sprang in with weapons raised and ready to inflict instant death on the outlaw, had he been there.

"He's off! Catch him if you can!" exclaimed Childeric.

"Yes—the man Clyde was he!" roared Renfrew. "Away! he cannot be far off."

"You said he was dead."

"It was not true. Clyde is Storme. Away! we lose time here!" bellowed Renfrew, clear-minded now, though smarting with pain.

In another instant the room was vacated by all except the boy and the old man, and Mr. Putnutter, who danced about the room, almost delicious with joy.

"I pointed him out! I pointed him out!" he cried. "If they take him the reward will be mine! Of course they'll nab him, dead or alive! Fifteen thousand pounds, dead or alive! For me! Putnutter! Yes!"

But young Childeric hotly replied:

"Aye, they may take Captain Storme, but not alive."

David Sanders stared at the boy in silent admiration. True, Childeric's eyes were filled with tears, for he devotedly loved his father; but his beautifully moulded features were firm and proud, and the tears did not dim the steady fire of his defiant glance.

"A noble face! a grand face!" muttered old David Sanders, as he gazed at the boy. "It is well that his father desires to remove him from the dangerous associations of his own life. Let us hope they will not catch your father, my boy," he said, aloud.

"Oh, I am very sure they will not catch him to-night," replied the boy. "I am not thinking of that, sir; but it makes me very sad to be parted from papa, and to know that he is being hunted down like a wolf or a mad dog; when I know, too, that he is good and kind, and has never harmed any one. But some day," added he, as a flash of his daring spirit lighted up the gloom that had begun to cloud his heroic face, "I shall be old and strong enough to fight for him."

"Better as it is, my boy—far better. But you are tired and sleepy—"

"Sleepy! I do not think I can sleep, for thinking of my father."

"Oh, but you must take some rest. I insist," said David, with an attempt to look resolute, and very doubtful of its reception.

"Father told me to obey you, sir," replied Childeric, respectfully, "and I will do it, for I have never disobeyed him in all my life."

"Right—always right," said David, unconsciously repeating the phrase of the lad's father. "It is a wonder to me how the boy was so admirably reared by my fiery friend of the sea. Wonderful!"

But at that instant Dame Boxy made her appearance, much flushed in visage and agitated in feature.

"David," said she, sinking slowly and cautiously into a chair, and so swallowing it up as it were in her immense expanse of gown—"David, tell me it air a scandal—a calumny. Don't go for to tell me that Mr. Clyde, with them handsome viskers, vos Captain Storme—now don't!"

"It is true, I am sorry to say, missus. Don't speak so loud—this is his son."

"David, he vos an uncommon handsome man, and a—vidderer, too. But to think a reg'lar smuggler capt'n has been here in the 'Pipe and Pitcher'!"

With this last exclamation, she lifted her eyes and hands to the ceiling, and added:

"Boxy! oh, Boxy! could you hev survived it? You might—for you was tough, Boxy! But if you ain't in Heaven, Boxy, that toughness ought to be a consolation to you."

"Our young friend needs rest, Dame Boxy," said David. "To-morrow I will relieve you of all care of the children—Mr. Clyde's children—let us always speak of him as Mr. Clyde."

"Certainly, David—I can never think of him as Captain Storme; and as for that matter, David, the children can remain here just as long as they like—their board and expenses being regularly paid, I mean, in advance. David, I say, you don't see so very much resemblance atween the children to each other, nor to their father, do you? I don't, David."

"Well, I must say there is a marked family resemblance in all three."

"David Sanders, don't provoke me by contradiction. I never could abear that. Somehow I don't see a particle of resemblance. Oh, I forgot—I have a note for you. Here it is. Maybe it air a love letter, David."

"A love letter!" laughed the old man, as he took the note. "Ah! if it were for you, it might be. Why, it is addressed in a beautiful female hand, too."

"So it is, David."

"A strange hand, to me," said David, shaking his head, and breaking the seal.

He read the note, and continued to shake his head, muttering:

"I do not understand it."

"Wot is it, David, if the question suits you?"

"A sorry jest, as it is not the first of April. It says:

"Light your pipe with this, David Sanders." No more."

"It were given into my hand by Dotty, the post-man from Little Ullsburgh, David. Well, light your pipe with it, since it is the chaff of some light-headed loon."

David filled his pipe, smiled in a puzzled way, and touched one end of the note to the flame of the candle.

As the heat began to act upon the paper, and before it could take fire, the old man saw black lines of a firm, strong handwriting begin to start into sight.

He uttered a cry of surprise, and withdrew the note quickly.

"Don't burn your fingers, David. Oh, bless the boy! he has fallen asleep!" said Dame Boxy, looking towards the lad.

"No, I have not," exclaimed Childeric, opening his eyes as bright as a star. "I was thinking with my eyes shut—of father."

Meanwhile David had read these words in the note, words drawn out clearly by the heat of the candle, as the quick-witted old man held the mysterious note over the flame:

"At the Cave of Hawthorn Grove. Come immediately. C. de C."

"Dame Boxy!" almost shouted the old man, snatching up his hat and cane. "A chaise! a gig! a horse!"

As he spoke he poured a shower of gold pieces upon his head. In his sudden excitement he had forgotten the coin in his hat.

"Heaven deliver us!" cried Dame Boxy, amazed.

"What hails the man? and where did all the gold come from? And what on earth do you want with a chaise?"

"My father gave him the gold," said Childeric.

"And I want to go—to go—to go—to Little Ullsburgh!" stammered David, dancing with impatience. "Here—I'm off—"

"Stop!" gasped the dame, grasping David's arm.

"You are gone crazy! Going to have the gold—"

"Gold! What's gold to me now! Ha, ha! Sir Jules, now look to your own! Hurrah! my time is at hand! Hoo! Let me go, you porpoise!" roared David, struggling.

He would have struggled in vain in the dame's powerful hands had he not uttered the last insulting words. But on hearing them Dame Boxy dealt him a cuff, and recoiled to a chair, where she sat down panting.

"Oh! oh! that I should have lived to be called a porpoise! and by David Sanders!"

The old man was gone like a flash.

"He's gone mad," said the dame, reflectively, and addressing the ceiling. "He's wild as a march hare, Boxy. I allers said his troubles would make him daft. What are you doin' of, my boy?"

"Picking up Mr. Sanders' money," replied the lad. "Father gave it to him. I have it all now, I think."

"Oh, you needn't hunt about for it, my pretty boy. If any is found after, why I'll take care of it for Mr. Sanders, since he is gone crazy. Bring t'other candle, my dear, and I'll show you to your room. This has been a night of peradventures! Captain Storme has talked soft to me, and David Sanders has gone ravin', stark, starin' mad!"

And followed by the boy, she left the room, muttering:

"But, Lor' bless me! Mr. Clyde had the finest pair of whiskers I ever saw—and he is a vidderer! I just hope they won't catch him, nor shave off them whiskers if they catch him."

Leaving Dame Boxy and her hopes for the present, we must hasten to introduce the reader to characters who are to play a far more important part in this story.

While the events we have narrated were transpiring at the "Pipe and Pitcher," Sir Jules Amoor de Cressy, lord of Cressy Hall and the vast Cressy estate, had been for a time dreamily listening to the music of a guitar, touched gently by the soft hand of a fair-haired and blue-eyed lady, in one of the parlours of the Hall.

It was not a saloon for the reception of guests, but a favourite and retired apartment of Sir Jules, secure in its luxurious privacy from the prying eyes and listening ears which ever infest, like vermin, a house of many servants.

The furniture and appointments of the room were of the richest material and taste—the selection of the last predecessor of Sir Jules, Sir Childeric De Cressy, who had perished at sea some twelve years before we introduce Sir Jules.

All that taste and gold could procure now surrounded its two occupants, Sir Jules and the lady with the fair hair.

He was a man far below the medium stature, almost diminutive, in truth, of cold and haughty mien, which he desired should be deemed statelyness—though he would have gladly parted with many of his broad acres to add a few inches to his height.

His features must have once been remarkably handsome; though when we present him they were haughty, supercilious, cold, and stamped with a pervading expression of contempt for his inferiors in wealth and rank.

His hair and beard were straw-coloured, and in strange contrast with the ink-black eyes, and

heavy beetling eyebrows as black. His dress was of the richest material and latest style, for in his garb the baronet was a confirmed dandy.

His age was apparently between forty and forty-five. He bore his age well. Time and he had fought many a sharp battle over the first wrinkle, but time had won that and many more, and scarred the corners of his eyes—those brilliant, cruel eyes—with the point of his inexorable scythe, nor left his face untouched. His once girlish-like complexion had faded sorely into a sallowness undeniable.

The lady, seated not far from him upon a crimson ottoman, with neck, throat, and shoulders white as snow, and faultless in their mould, was in fact fully thirty-five, yet so delicately had time touched her charms of form and face, that even a practised eye would have readily judged her to be not more than twenty-five.

As she is to play an important part in our story, the reader will pardon a partial portraiture of Julia Sanders, the second wife of old David Sanders.

She was superbly beautiful. The homeliest features—and hers were exquisite—would have been attractive with her dazzling, fair, Saxon complexion, so smooth, polished, and snow-like, that a breath too rudely blown upon it might have seemed like an attack upon the pollen of some rare flower. There was not a single homely feature in her face. Her loveliness, as a whole, was indescribable, her beauty a master-work of nature and art combined. Her hair, a light golden, and massive, soft and polished as virgin silk. Her form, too, was as faultless as her face, and the rich garb of costly satin she wore was also faultless.

She had once loved Sir Jules. That was when he bore another name, and was the adventurer and not the baronet. He had once loved her, so far as his coarse and sensuous nature was capable of love.

There was no love between them now, though slanderous tongues hinted there was, and though poor old David Sanders, the deserted husband, believed there was. She was his housekeeper, the head lady of his house, and no more to him. He told the world she was a distant relation, impoverished and disgusted with her late union with a foolish, jealous, ruined old man.

That was a falsehood, for she was, so far as Sir Jules knew, no relative of his, remote or near. She was simply his housekeeper, a lady to sit at the table as a poor relative, the chief lady of his numerous household.

She had been more to him, twenty years before she turned her back in scorn and repudiation upon David Sanders. Time was when she believed she was the wife of this now wealthy baronet.

He believed she loved him still as she had years before. But he was careful to be on his guard—treating her only as a privileged servant when they were alone together. In truth he avoided her as far as he could.

He hated her.

We let that sentence stand by itself, for he hated her; and more,

He feared her.

He hated and feared her, and intended to be rid of her, at some future time, when the chance to drive her from his sight and home should happen.

An hour had passed in that parlour, its silence unbroken by a single word from him. Heaven only knows of what he was thinking. No doubt of himself. Men who are mere insects amid the great roar and rush of life, are much given to imagine their little buzz and whizz are as essential to the world's progress as the sun is necessary to produce light and heat.

Sir Jules was one of these men, with a great deal of the wasp and the hornet in him.

She had been singing and playing upon her guitar. Her voice, like herself, was perfection. Her playing was faultless, and at times the parlour had thrilled with her exquisite melody. She sang no plaintive ballad, no heart-melting ditty, but grand and triumph-breathing airs, with deep and swelling choruses, which rolled and melted into enchanting music from her vermilion lips, with every variation and excellence of tone and style.

At last some air prompted him to speak.

"Mrs. Sanders!"

She paused and looked up. Then after a glance at the clock—and while she sang and played her eyes had stolen many a glance at the clock—she threw the guitar aside with a weary gesture, murmuring:

"It is time! They are doubtless there—if Jerome has not failed me."

"Mrs. Sanders!"

"At your service, Sir Jules," she replied, coldly, and rising from the ottoman.

"I had to call your name twice, madam."

"Pardon. I am sorry, sir."

"The name of Sanders—which I abhor, as being that of your husband."

"It is my intention to change it."

"Good! Any name but that—as I told you when

the fellow was arrested. Are you going to get a divorce and marry—ahem! Mark Renfrew?" asked the baronet, smoothing his flaxen beard with his white and girlish fingers. "I wish you would."

"I shall never be more divorced than I am, Sir Jules, nor be more married than I am," she replied. "I hate Mark Renfrew."

"Good! So do I! Do you know, if I die without heirs, Mark Renfrew will be Sir Mark, and lord of Cressy Hall. But I was about to say, Mrs. Sanders, you should be an opera-singer—a prima donna. Play and sing that air again—tra-li-ra! li!—le-ra!—how does it run? tra-li-ra!—tra—"

"Sir Jules de Cressy!" she said, suddenly, and with a red spot springing to each cheek. "I can see that you are trying to affront me by your sneering mimicry. You wish me to leave the room. You are trying to pick a quarrel with me. Well, let us have a quarrel!"

"A quarrel!" he exclaimed, annoyed by her manner. "Bah! I do not quarrel with my housekeepers. I discharge them."

"Discharge me, Sir Jules."

"I should be delighted, if you would let me," said he, frowning. "You are welcome to return to David Sanders this moment."

"David Sanders is nothing to me, now, Sir Jules, and can never be again. True, the world says I am dishonouring his name—and what truth there is in that you can tell."

"I know that you are a living icicle, and always were, except when you thought—well, we have agreed not to speak of what you once thought you were."

"You mean I was not a living icicle when I thought I was your wife, Sir Jules."

"Silence, woman," he exclaimed, with sudden fierceness, and glancing uneasily around. "Have what you never were famous for having—discretion."

"You are afraid some one may overhear us!" she said, and it was wonderful to see how her beautiful face could become that of a snoring fiend, but beautiful still.

"Come—we have had all too much of this," he said, and standing before a full-length mirror. "I must change my valet-de-chambre—he ties my cravat execrably. Ah! are you still in the room? Really, Mrs. Sanders!"

"Of course I am. It was your whim I should come into this room to sing and play for you—as you have insisted upon my doing for weeks past—"

"Very true—but I shall not trouble you—bah! I mean I shall not favour you again with the—aha! command. You may go, Mrs. Sanders."

"Thank you. I desire to have a conversation with you, Sir Jules."

"So—you mean to have a quarrel, madam! I remember that scowl of yours—you used to give me too much of it, years ago—go!"

As he commanded, he pointed towards the door. "I say—"

"Go! I have heard enough!" he repeated, angrily, for he was rapidly losing his self-control. It pained him to grow angry, for he had acquired a kind of iciness of demeanour and face of which he was very vain. But at heart he was fierce and bitter—fierce as flame; bitter as gall. "Go!"

"No, sir."

He stared at her in amazement for an instant; then turning towards the door near him, said, coldly and contemptuously:

"I shall not attempt to force you."

"The door is locked," he added, after a vain attempt to open it.

"Yes, and so is the other one, and the one that leads into the room through the alcove which those curtains hide. You may try them, if you like."

He did try them, and found them locked. He glanced around for the bell-cord. The bell-cord had been removed.

He grew pale and scowled at her. She drew herself to her full height, a tall majestic woman, with her splendid face blazing with scorn.

"Are you gone mad, Mrs. Sanders?"

"Not at all, Sir Jules—at least there is method in my madness. I looked the doors before I began to sing; I have the keys. We are to have a final understanding. I pledge you my sacred word, Sir Jules, that after this hour you and I shall never meet in private again, with my consent. You have avoided the conversation I desire to have, and now I demand it."

"Oh! she demands it!" he said, throwing himself in a reclining position upon a sofa, and laughing mockingly. "Well, we may as well fight any battle we are to have now as hereafter."

He was very cool and very sarcastic, but habit began to yield to nature, as habit ever does before strong emotion in most men, and the cruel eyes began to flame like those of an angry tiger, and the thin nostrils began to arch and swell.

"You must listen to me, Sir Jules."

"Must! The idea that a woman like this Julia Sanders dares say 'must' to me!"

"Sir, you know that I married David Sanders when you were absent on the Continent. Had I known or dreamed that you, whose steward he was, were Clarence Vereton—"

"Take care, madam!"

"I never would have married David Sanders. You know that Clarence Vereton, as you were known to me, could never have triumphed over me, except through a false marriage, which I believed to be valid and sacred."

"Ah!"

"Though I loved you then, Sir Jules, and though I was an unsuspecting girl, you knew that I was too high-minded, too upright by nature and rearing, ever to hold any relation near you, unsanctioned by the holy name of wife—"

"I will not listen—"

"You shall stop your ears then, coward, with your hands, that you may not hear of your cowardly deeds!" she cried.

"Oh, if you are really going to be violent—well, begin! Should I chance to fall asleep, pray, do not disturb me. 'Pon my word, the toes of these French shoes of mine are a trifle too wide—do you not think so?" he said, extending one of his small and elegant feet towards her. "You should be a judge, as I heard you were once a ballet-dancer. After I, ah! parted from you, I think you were a popular danseuse in Paris. Pray, are my shoes really the thing, if you and I were to try a *pas-de-deux* now?"

She flushed deep red, and stared at him scornfully. "Or—has you rose higher, and became, I have heard, a tragedy-queen," he added, mockingly, and crossing his feet—"you are about to give me a private rehearsal of a tragedy."

"Tragedy or comedy—you are to hear it, and you will not go to sleep."

"Good! Pray be seated, madam. I have a constitutional horror of seeing a lady, or even a woman like you, standing in my presence. Here! I light this cigar to aid you in keeping me awake. You never objected to the odour of tobacco—you have powerful nerves. If there is one imperfection in your really magnificent character, Mrs. Sanders, it is that you are too masculine—masculine as a coal-heaver, or a hod-carrier—fault of your ancestors, of course. Oh, do not sit quite so near. You really might forget yourself and cuff me, as they say you used to cuff that unfortunate old David Sanders. There, that will do. Now, let us hear the play."

"This trifling will not avail you, Sir Jules. Smoke calmly while you may, for as surely as I sit here, that cigar will change its flavour before I conclude."

"Ah, really!" said he, closing his eyes, and smoking.

"It is now very nearly twenty-three years, Sir Jules, since you, under the name of Clarence Vereton, married me. I was Julia Sterlington, not quite sixteen, joyous, buoyant, beloved, and termed very beautiful."

"Beautiful and virtuous you were. You are beautiful yet, madam; but the other—oh, do not question me!" he said, with a sneer.

She could have struck him in the face, and he deserved it, for whatever she was, or had been since he first met her, he had made her.

She grew very pale under his taunt, but in a clear, quick voice, continued, as she moved her seat very far from him, so that to make her hear his speeches, it would be necessary for him to speak quite loud.

"I was a daughter of a retired clergyman, whose pride of me was equalled only by his love for me. I know that you are familiar with all this."

"Of course I am."

"But when you—"

"Say Clarence Vereton."

"You—I mean you—for you know you bore that name then, though your true name was Jules de Cressy."

"Had you an audience, madam, you could scarcely speak in a higher tone."

"Very true; and I wish my audience, you—" But here she shot a quick glance towards the silken curtains of the alcove, which was not many feet from Sir Jules, and in his rear, as he reclined upon the sofa, with his face partially towards her. "I wish the audience to hear every word I say."

The silken curtain stirred as if with a breath of air.

Had Sir Jules noticed the curtains moving he would have suspected the truth, he would not have said, impatiently:

"Well, well! I was Sir Jules Amour de Cressy, under the name of Clarence Vereton."

"You mistake. There was no 'Sir' to your real name then. You were not a baronet then. You courted me, I loved you—or thought I did. I wonder now if I really loved you."

"Of course you did. Ha! ha! I was a very handsome fellow then—am yet, I think—but then—well, my complexion was fatal among the ladies. But you were jealous. And I think you are now—"

of the beautiful young widow who has just come into Little Ullaburgh—Mrs. Hayland, the exquisite artiste in portrait-painting. I think I will engage her services, even if you are jealous, to retouch some of the Cressy portraits, and paint one of me."

"Do not be impatient, as I am to speak of Mrs. Hayland before I conclude. You married me—"

"You mistake. I made you believe I married you. Pardon me for the interruption. This cigar is really fragrant."

"I will speak of that also. Just before our child was born you deserted me, leaving behind you a letter, in which you told me I was not your wife; that the ceremony was a mere sham; that the person who pretended to marry us was neither priest nor parson, but a mere hanger-on of yours—that the so-called Rev. Charles Kimmure was in your pay, a fellow named Ned Logan, of Oxford—a notorious debauchee; that all was a sham—that I had been deceived—"

"In short, madam, that your beauty had led me to win you—not to marry you—and that I had tired of the prize. A very common affair. To have you tell it is a bore. Perhaps you experience a kind of second-hand pleasure in going over those events in your memory. I don't. Speaking for myself, now Sir Jules de Cressy—then Clarence Vereton—I care not a straw for those things now."

"I am well aware of that. You cannot reveal anything base that I do not know already in your character. That letter, which I sought to conceal, fell into the hands of my parents. The shame they felt, their grief, their woe over the lost honour of their beloved daughter, hurried them rapidly to their graves."

"Poor things! But by this time I trust they are like you—very happy."

"Patience. My sister—you never saw her—was the first wife of David Sanders."

"My life! that is news," said Sir Jules, with a slight start. "Did he know that when he married you?"

"He does not know it even now."

"It does not matter, I imagine. I remember now that you used to tell me you had a twin sister."

"Named Emily."

"Aye—yes—so it was. Emily."

"Who had married a man named Sanders."

"Very true. Now you speak of it I do recall that—that circumstance," said Sir Jules, with a stare, and feeling uneasy.

(To be continued.)

THE French Government has resolved that the formality of the passport should be universally re-established during the war.

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF 1871.—There is no foundation for the rumour that the International Exhibition appointed for 1871 is to be postponed by reason of the war. The first of the series of Annual International Exhibitions of Selected Works of Fine and Industrial Art and Scientific Inventions will take place next year, as already announced.

THE WAR SHIP OF THE FUTURE.—Admiral Sartorius says:—"It is quite certain that we have not found out the new model for the vessel of war of the future. But war trials on a large and terrible scale tend to show that the prow, as in ancient times, and not the gun, is likely to become the great arbiter in the naval battles of the future. It alone gave the victory to the smaller squadron at the battle of Lissa; it destroyed one powerful Federal frigate, and obliged the other to haul down her colours to avoid the fate of her consort. Again, when the Russian fleet were exercising, notwithstanding all efforts on both sides to prevent the catastrophe, the ram bow sunk a large vessel of that squadron. The case of the Monitor and the ram Merrimac proves nothing against the principle of the ram. The Merrimac was hastily extemporised from the hull of an old frigate. It was very slow (7 or 8 knots), and very unhandy. The Monitor was very short and very handy. Neither took or destroyed the other. The latter went down in a moderate gale. If the ram is used mainly as a projectile (its true characteristic), it should infallibly be made to possess great strength, great speed, great handiness, and be low in the water. For ocean service the ram would be more efficient without a gun or armour plating. In the war now commencing it will be those with the strongest nerve, guiding the handiest and quickest ram, and trusting the least to guns, with whom the victory will lie. These are the views I have maintained from 1855. I still maintain them with stronger convictions. Should it be the misfortune of our country to be drawn into this war, although official arrangements prevent, I think wisely, men of my age from having commands, yet I trust these arrangements will not prohibit my being, as a volunteer, on any vessel fitted out as a ram upon the principle I am advocating ordered out for service against an enemy."



[THE ESCAPE.]

MONTROSE; OR, THE RED KNIGHT.

CHAPTER XIII.

Truly, a goodly knight!
What shapeliness and state he hath! what eyes!
Brave brow, and lordly lip! Were it not fit
Great dames should love him? *Scindburne.*

It was past noon, and all was confusion and excitement at Montrose Castle. The Lady Isabel and Margaret were missing, and the worst fears were entertained. The woman Rachel told her story—how a messenger had come from the cottage—how she had seen Isabel and her maid go out by the postern—and how she had been directed to remain there and await their return. Douglas and Bertram, with a score of men, went down to the cot, and found it deserted. They discovered tracks in the sand, and in the grove of lime-trees they found where horses had been picketed. The neighbouring woods and mountain passes were scoured, but without avail. Later, however, a shepherd came in from the southern plain, and told them that he had seen, some time before noon, four men, accompanied by two females, riding away down the valley.

"Jasper St. Julien hath done this!" said Bertram, in a hushed tone.

Douglas started as though an asp had stung him; and yet he had thought the same thing—aye, he had been so convinced—but the words of the esquire gave form and substance to the thought, and presented the terror in all its nakedness.

"That man alone is the despoiling demon!" returned the Scot, quivering like an aspen. "He rode away to the southward, and has borne his prey to the Castle of Buchala."

"He swore he would do that; and he hath done it. There is no room for doubt, Sir Robert."

"None at all, good Bertram; and it only remains for us to follow on."

"Whither?"

"Whither, ask you? To the villain's own lair, of course."

Bertram clutched his hands, and shut his teeth hard together.

"Sir Robert," he said, in constrained tones, as though the words were hard to speak, "you can feel no more than do I; for, remember, Margaret is the life of my life; and I know you will not deem me

lacking in courage. But we may not yet proceed openly against the Castle of Buchala. I know the force there in arms. St. Julien hath the whole southern wing of Vikern's army under his command. He hath both Saracens and Christians. Could we even lead all the men we have, it would not avail us; and you can judge whether we shall leave Montrose defenceless."

"Bertram, thou art right. We must not withdraw our force from Montrose. And yet, oh, Heaven! we must do something! I cannot live thus. My heart will burst!"

Bertram ground his heel into the earth, while the working of his features showed how intense were his feelings. And yet he had not the same cause of alarm that had fallen upon Douglas. His love had been snatched away, but not as the prime object of the villain. Margaret had only been taken because she had chanced to be with her mistress. It was the Lady Isabel who was the marked victim—over whom the cloud hung with threatening of immediate evil; and realising this, the esquire found sympathy to spare for the knight.

"Sir Robert," he said, "the day is near its close. As soon as it is dark I will go into the town, and raise a body of men for a reconnaissance. I will put Paul Nogent at the head. They shall go in the garbs of Moslems, and discover if the girls are really at Buchala, and learn how they are situated. I have a hope that the worst has not yet come. With the intelligence which Paul shall bring we may be aided in further deliberation. What else can we do?"

Douglas was forced to admit that nothing better presented itself, and shortly afterwards they entered the keep, where they found the countess well-nigh frantic with grief. Sir Robert related to her the principal points of the late conference between himself and Bertram, and told her what they had proposed to do.

"We cannot hide the truth," he added. "We know that Isabel is in the hands of Jasper St. Julien, and we have no doubt that she hath been borne away to his Castle of Buchala. But we dare not withdraw our men from Montrose, for we have in solemn charge the town at our feet."

"My good Robert," said Lady Montrose, struggling to compose herself, "take no thought of me at present. Earth hath little left that I can prize. Your duty is plain. This castle is set for the defence of Lystra. Remain at your post, and trust the rest to Heaven!"

Even as she spoke the air was broken by the echoes of a heavy tramping upon the drawbridge, and upon looking down into the court they beheld the blood-red armour of the mystic Knight of St. John. His crimson plume waved high above his casque, and in his presence the prayer of the countess seemed to find an answer. Both Robert and Bertram hastened down to bid him welcome, and the youthful knight was ready to greet him as he slipped from his saddle.

"Ah, my fair sir—and you, my good Bertram—how speeds it at Montrose?"

"Alas!" returned Douglas, "it speedeth but ill!"

"I know, I know," the stalwart knight replied. "It is a terrible blow! Heaven rest his soul!"

"Your benison is for our noble earl?"

"Aye. For whom else should it be?"

"Ah! another blow hath come!"

"Another?" repeated the mystic knight, in a hoarse whisper. "Has further evil befallen this house? Speak!"

"Alas! yes. The Lady Isabel and Margaret Ramsey have been snatched away."

"Dead?"

"No. It may be worse!"

The knight started and quivered till the plates of his armour rattled with the shock.

"Speak on," he said, gaspingly. "Tell me all."

And Douglas told him the story as he understood it.

"Aye," responded the eager listener, when the story had been told, "Jasper St. Julien is the man. And what had you planned to do?"

"We can only send a small force to gain intelligence," answered Douglas; "and upon their report we can base further action."

"Right!" said the Red Knight. "You can do no more at present. But I must see the countess. She is—"

"She is well in body," returned Douglas, as the other hesitated; "and I know that she is even now anxiously awaiting you."

"Awaiting me?"

"She saw you as you entered the court."

The unknown gave his horse into the care of a groom, and then followed Douglas to the hall, where Lady Montrose waited. The crimson-clad warrior stopped when he saw the pale, sad face of the countess; but it was only for the moment. As she put forth her hand, with beseeching and confiding gesture, he hastened forward, and grasped it eagerly.

"Gentle lady," he said, in tones like the soft moan—

ing of the west wind, "I ask that Heaven's blessing may rest upon thee! Thy sorrows are known unto me, and full well I know how thy tender heart hath been stricken; and yet I say unto thee, faint not. Grief is not the final lot of the pure in heart. Grief is but for the present hour—joy cometh in the end!"

"Kind sir," returned Belinda, looking upon the mesh of crimson steel that hid the face of the knight; "thy presence is a comfort, and thy words are inspiring. Would that I could know thee better."

"Lady,"—the voice was low and musical—"years ago, when we were young and hopeful, with an untried world before us, I knew thee, and thou didst know me; and all the years that have passed have not stricken the sweet memory from me. Know that thou art an object of my care. I will not forsake thee while I live!"

What was it that came rolling back from the other years? What was it that touched so deeply the spring of treasured memories half forgotten? What was it in the tones of that voice that stirred her soul so mysteriously, and awoke echoes of sweet melody in her soul? She moved nearer to the strange knight, and reached her hand to his shoulder; and the steel plates seemed warm and instinct with life beneath her touch.

"Something tells me," she said, "that I may confide in you. Oh, if I might look upon your face! If you knew how this poor heart yearns. If I might see you smile, if I could but hold that smile in memory, I should treasure it above all worldly things!"

The knight drew back, trembling in every limb. "Urge me not, lady. Only a most solemn vow could hold me to a refusal of your request. Were I to reveal myself while I wear this blood-red armour I should break my knightly oath. But it cannot last for ever. The end may be nearer than we think. Until then, know that thy welfare shall be dearer to me than life. Thou wilt not fear to trust me?"

"No, no,—I will trust thee with all my soul!"

During this strange scene Robert Douglas had stood like one transfixed. The voice of the mystic knight had a familiar sound, and back through the crowding memories of the past his thoughts wandered for a clue to the enigma. But all in vain. It was like the story of a forgotten dream—the impress remaining only as a thing of shadow and outline—the details gone past recovery. He turned to look at Bertram and found the esquire wiping a tear from his cheek.

"Good Bertram," he eagerly whispered, "what is it? Does your memory serve you? Know you that man?"

"Hush! Sir Robert—not a word more! My thoughts are with another."

"With Margaret?"

"Not so!—with one who has a prior claim!"

At this point, the countess, moving back, and sinking upon a seat, faintly murmured:

"Alas! poor Isabel! Who shall help her in this great strait? Oh! it is terrible!"

"Dear lady," said Douglas, moving to her side, "we will send off our men at once. Take hope. At least, faint not until we know the worst."

"Hold!" interrupted the Red Knight, as Bertram was preparing to leave the apartment. "Sir Robert, you and Bertram had best not leave the castle at present. All that can be done at Buchala I can do."

"You?" said Douglas.

"Yes. And I will assume the duty."

"But you will need help."

"Such help as I may want I can easily summon.

And, moreover, I possess an advantage which might not rest with those whom you would employ. I am intimately acquainted with all the secret passages of St. Julien's castle. I knew them ere that wicked knight held command there. I can go in, and come out, while no man of the garrison is the wiser. Will you trust the work to me?"

"Aye," cried Douglas,—"that will I do most joyfully. But thou shalt not smite Jasper St. Julien. He must be left to me. I would meet him face to face, once more."

"Leave that with Heaven, my son! But be sure that Jasper St. Julien shall be sufficiently punished. But the night is upon us, and I must away. Good Bertram, my horse has borne me far to-day, and is weary. At all events, he is not fit for the work I have now taken in hand."

"Make your mind easy on that score, noble sir," replied the esquire. "I can furnish you with a horse that will serve your purpose."

The strange knight turned again to the countess, and took her hand.

"Lady," he said, "I would that I might offer you

such consolation as should open to you once more the bright and promising life that hath been so sadly clouded. And yet I may venture to bid you hope for better things than you now dream of. You have friends who are strong and true. Rely upon them, and take heart."

He would have spoken further, but at that juncture an officer of the guard entered.

"Pardon," said the new-comer.

"Stop not to excuse thyself," interrupted the Red Knight. "I see upon thy face token of weighty intelligence. Speak."

"Noble sir," returned the officer, "a messenger hath just arrived from the north with information of great importance. The Prince of Antioch has fought a battle with Rupin of the Mountain, and the forces of Armenia have been routed. Rupin himself hath retired to his principality; but large numbers of his men have joined the host of Vikern, and are now on their way to this valley."

"And this Norman Vikern is in league with Malek-Adel?" said Douglas.

"Yes. He comes to join Marouf of the Black Tower."

"Not knowing," interposed the mystic knight, "that the Black Tower is in the hands of the Christians. By the life of my soul! this bold Norman may find more work in our valley than he hath anticipated. Sir Robert, who holds command at the Tower?"

"Philip Vinay."

"A good man and true. Let him be at once informed of this movement; and bid him hold the place at all hazards. And bid him, too, that he looks well to his prisoners."

"But," suggested Douglas, "the Norman chief will surely learn, ere he reaches our valley, of the mishap which hath befallen Marouf."

"Aye," returned the unknown; "but he will not find the walls of Marouf's tower for shelter. Let Philip hold the place, and do you bring hither those people of Lystra who would enjoy your protection. Meanwhile, I will away upon my own business."

"Oh, good sir," ventured the countess; "you will save my child?"

"I will do all that mortal man can do, dear lady. I wish I could promise you more."

"That is enough, sir knight. And may Heaven bless you in your efforts! I shall not cease to pray."

The shadows of evening had fallen upon the valley when the mystic knight went forth from the keep. Bertram, with his own hand, had transferred the blood-red trappings to the noble charger which the earl had been wont to ride, and the intelligent animal neighed and pranced with evident satisfaction at being thus prepared once more for active service; and when the knight had vaulted to his back, he seemed eager and impatient, as though conscious of the importance of the mission in which he was engaged.

Douglas watched the dark, towering form of the crimson warrior until an angle of the barbacan shut it from his view, and then he slowly returned to the keep. For a time all thought of the lost earl was put away, and every grief in the absence of Isabel was in a measure replaced by the aimless conjectures and vain fancies forced upon him by the mystery of the Red Knight of St. John.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mary Beaten: I doubt you will not go hence with your life.

Chastelard: Why, who should slay me? No man northwards born.

In my poor mind; my sword's lip is no maid's, To fear the iron biting of their arm, Though they kiss hard for hate's sake.

CHASTELARD: a Tragedy.

AND the same shadows which deepened and darkened upon the gray turrets of Montrose made still more grim and dark the sombre walls of Buchala. Isabel and Margaret had watched the fading landscape until the gloom had swallowed it up, and then they had turned away from the open window, filled with forebodings which they dared not speak.

Later an Arab woman brought in candles, shortly after which a second woman brought refreshments. This last attendant was well advanced in years, and of her Isabel ventured to ask questions; but she did not answer. She did not signify that she heard. She set the salver upon a side table, and having cast her eyes around, as though to see that the apartment was in order, she withdrew. Half-an-hour afterwards she came back; but she did not take away the salver. She simply looked in, and retired without closing the door.

"That signifies," said Margaret, "that we are to have another visitor."

And hardly had the words been spoken when Jasper St. Julien made his appearance. He was dressed in a suit of purple velvet, his vest and doublet heavily ornamented, and his whole attire far richer than was usual with him. He advanced and took a seat near to where the girls were seated.

"Lady," he said, addressing Isabel, "you have had time for rest and refreshment, and I have thought proper to give you a ray of enlightenment before you retire. I trust that upon the main point you are already sufficiently informed. You know why I have brought you hither."

Isabel could not speak. She could only gaze into the dark, sinister face of the recreant knight, and shudder.

"Can you not answer?"

"I know not what to answer. I only know that I am your prisoner; and perhaps, for the present, at your mercy."

"Say not so, Isabel. I would not have you feel that you are a prisoner. You are under restraint, because the necessity is forced upon me; but you must regard me as a friend rather than a gaoler."

"If you would prove yourself my friend, you will set me free, and allow me to return to my home."

"My dear lady, you labour under a grave error. You need not go hence to find your home; for, in the time to come, your home is with me. Let that much be understood."

Isabel caught her breath, and struggled to compose herself. The words aroused her, and the significant look—so evil and so exulting—filled her with mingled feelings of fear and indignation.

"Sir Jasper," she said, "I cannot think that you fully mean all that your words would seem to convey."

"My meaning must be plain, lady; and if you are in doubt, I can explain it in a single sentence: you are to be my wife."

"Jasper St. Julien, that cannot be. You dare not—"

"Hush, lady! I dare do anything that may be dared."

"But, you cannot be serious. You cannot want a wife whose only sentiment towards you could be—"

"Go on, lady. Do not hesitate. Let me know your mind. What only could be your sentiments?"

"You can judge yourself," replied the maiden, with kindling eye and flushing cheek. "How would you feel towards one who had stolen you from your home; who restrained you against your will; and who sought to crush out every joy and promise of good from your being?"

"You present a strong case, lady—too strong for a parallel. Let me present it truly. From the time when you first blushed into womanhood I have seen you only to admire and love. Your father's interests and my own were identical. He held the northern pass of the Lebanon, and I the southern. At a proper time I proposed for your hand, deeming that the marriage would be not only equal, but advantageous to all concerned. Your father did not refuse me. He bade me wait."

"Aye," interrupted Isabel; "he bade you wait for my decision. He said that I should bestow my own hand."

"He bade me wait," pursued Sir Jasper, "and I did wait, not deeming that an alliance of such importance should be set upon the hazard of a woman's whim. Your father is dead, and I am now the lord of this domain; and take you as my ward and my wife. Thus much you now understand; and it only remains for me to give my reason for visiting you at this time. I am liable to be called away on the morrow, and have resolved that the marriage ceremony shall be performed before that summons comes. We will be married early in the morning; so you will hold yourself in readiness."

"Mercy! mercy! Oh, no, no—you will not do that!"

"I have spoken, lady."

"Then let me speak!" cried Isabel, starting to her feet, and clasping her hands. "You cannot make me your wife, before Heaven, against my will; and my lips shall never speak consent—never!"

"As you please, lady," returned St. Julien, with a wicked smile. "The future is before you, and you can make it as pleasant, or as miserable, as you please."

He paused a moment, and then added, with a fearful oath:

"One thing is fixed—my wife you must be—and shall be, before to-morrow's sun is an hour old! I can love you yet; but be sure I can hate, as well;

and if you force me to hate, you shall rue the hour in which the passion entered my soul! But you will not be so foolish. I shall look to find you more rational."

The knight arose, and as he met the gaze of Margaret Ramsey, he said to her, with a smile:

"You, pretty maid, would be sensible, I know. I see it in your face. You would not plant thorns where you might plant roses?"

"Not if I could help it, sir knight."

"If you were offered the hand of a bold knight, you would not refuse it?"

"Not if I loved him."

"Bah! Throw love aside, and think of weightier reasons. Now, if you were in the place of your mistress, would you not accept my proffered hand?"

"Yes, sir knight."

"Spoken like a true woman! And now look ye, Margaret; if you love your lady, inspire her with your sentiments. And, furthermore, see that she is ready for the ceremony in the morning."

With this Sir Jasper went away, and Isabel sank down upon the low ottoman.

"Oh, Margaret, how could you speak those words in answer to the wicked man?"

"Dear lady," pleaded the maid, kneeling at her mistress's feet, "I dared not have him think that I would oppose him. Had I angered him, he might have taken me from you. I saw the spark in his eye—a spark ready to blaze into a flame of vindictive passion. I dared not tempt him. But it was for you, Isabel,—I would not be torn from you."

"Oh, no, no, Margy,—that would be dreadful! But you would not marry him?"

"If I did," replied Margaret, in hushed tones, while her cheeks grew pale with the thought, "it would be but an empty form. This keen blade should make me a widow ere he had embraced his wife!" And as she spoke, she drew the dagger from her bosom, and held it up.

Isabel started, and gazed into her companion's face. Her cheek flushed, and a flash was in her eye.

"Give me the dagger, Margaret. I think St. Julien has spoken in earnest."

"Of a surety he has, lady. Know you not that your father's vast wealth must go with your hand? Jasper St. Julien knows this; and even were you deformed and ugly, he would press his suit all the same."

"Oh, Heaven! is there no help?"

"Dear Isabel, forget not that you live; and while there is life there is hope."

"Hope only in this!" groaned the stricken girl, looking upon the dagger.

"Hark! Heard you that sound?"

While Isabel was speaking the air had been pierced by a low, shrill whistle. Margaret had started up from the ottoman, and stood in a listening attitude, when something came in at the window, with a whirling sound, and, striking against the opposite wall, fell to the floor. For a moment both the girls were stricken with alarm; but presently Margaret approached the spot, and beheld an arrow.

"Heaven have mercy!" ejaculated Isabel. "The Moslem warriors would slay us where we are!"

"No, lady,—this is not a murderous arrow. The head is of wood, and blunt.—Ah!—and see! There is a bit of something attached to it!"

"Margaret!—Oh—what can it be?"

"It is a piece of parchment. See, where it is tied on. I have heard of true knights thus giving information to imprisoned friends. It was thus that Sir Orlando, the Paladin, communicated with Gonneris in the tower of the cruel Dane."

With eager, trembling fingers Margaret cast loose the silken thread that confined the bit of parchment, and when she had set it free she handed the missive to her mistress. Isabel unrolled it, and read as follows:—

"To the Lady Isabel Montrose, and her attendant, Margaret,—You have a friend at hand who has come to help you. Do not remove your garments to-night. When you have extinguished your light, watch and wait for me; and be not alarmed when I come."

"THE RED KNIGHT OF ST. JOHN."

"Then you are saved!" cried Margaret, when her mistress had read the message.

"If the mysterious knight hath the power to reach us," added Isabel, hesitatingly.

"Oh—but I know he hath the power."

"How know you?"

"Because he can do what he pleases."

"That is more than human."

"No, dear lady,—because he does not seek to do

impossible things. Bertram told me that he could surely accomplish all that he attempted. At all events, we will be prepared for him."

"Aye, certainly we will."

The items of preparation were not many, and ere long the lights were extinguished, and the girls sat down to await the coming of their mysterious friend. By-and-by they heard a low footfall in the adjacent corridor, and Margaret started up.

"That is not the knight!" she whispered. "Let us hasten to our bed."

They felt their way to the adjoining apartment, and lay down upon the bed, and scarcely had they drawn the coverlet over their shoulders, when the Arab woman entered with a lamp, and looked at them; and when satisfied that all was right she withdrew, and the prisoners heard her shoot the bolts of the outer door after she had closed it behind her.

The girls lay very still until they knew that the woman had gone, and then they sat up and listened again. The minutes passed slowly and tediously away, and Isabel began to fear that their friend would not come; but before she had spoken her fears she heard a sound, as of the opening of a door, from the little dressing-room, beyond the bed-chamber. Breathlessly they listened and waited; and soon they heard a stealthy step near at hand, which seemed finally to stop at the entrance to the chamber. And then they heard a whispered voice:

"Lady Isabel Montrose!"

"I am here!" returned our heroine.

"Are you alone?"

"Margaret is with me."

"And all is clear else?"

"Yes."

Presently a dim light, from a small hooded lantern, broke the gloom, and the girls beheld a tall, stalwart form near them. It was surely the mystic knight, but instead of the heavy plate armour, he now wore a suit of fine Milan mail, over a groundwork of blood-red velvet, and his face was covered by a veil of fine steel network.

"Lady, I think you know me?"

The voice was like a whisper from Heaven, and impulsively the maiden answered:

"I know you, and bless you!"

"And you will trust me?"

"Aye—with my whole heart!"

"Then remove your shoes, and follow me. Let us speak no more here. Follow boldly, but make no noise."

Thus speaking the guide turned, and led the way out through the tiring-room, and thence, by an aperture which had been opened by the removing of a secret panel, to a vaulted passage beyond. This passage was very narrow and very low, as though built within a wall, and pursued a winding course, descending gradually and evenly.

"We are in one of the rear towers," said the knight; "and this is a secret passage, winding around in what appears, upon the outside, to be a solid wall. It is well for you that the secret passages of Buchala were known to me; otherwise we might have found it difficult to set you free. Be careful! Here we come to a flight of steps."

Down these steps, and then, through a low opening, into a broader passage, where they felt the fresh air. Just after emerging into this passage Isabel's foot caught against something which came very near to throwing her over, and upon looking down she was sure she saw a human form—an armed Saracen—and she had hit his foot.

"—ah!" whispered the knight. "Be not alarmed. He was in my way as I entered, and I was forced to remove him. He is past the power of doing harm more."

At length they reached the vaults beneath the castle, where the guide stopped and put on his own shoes, bidding the girls do the same. When this had been done, the knight picked up his lantern, remarking as he did so:

"We may now move more freely, though you must be careful how you tread, for the way is rough."

Presently they came to an opening in the wall, through which the guide bade the girls pass before him, and after he had followed he closed up the way by swinging a ponderous stone back into the aperture.

"We are now beyond the limits of the castle," he said, "and, I trust, beyond present danger. Jasper St. Julien little dreams that these secret passages are in such use; nor dreams he that the Knight of St. John possesses the key to them. Stoop low, and tread cautiously."

By-and-by they emerged into a dense thicket of

shrubbery, and Isabel saw the stars above her, and in the distance, against the sky, she beheld the towers of Buchala. A short distance further they found three horses, one of which neighed with a glad cry at her approach.

"It is our noble Castor!" she exclaimed, when she heard the well-known sound.

"Yes," returned the knight. "It is your father's favourite war-horse. And here are two faithful animals for yourself and Margaret."

"You have come from Montrose?"

"Yes; last evening."

"And my mother?"

"She is well, and expects you."

"Then you gave her hope of seeing me?"

"Yes."

"Oh, bless you, good sir!"

"I shall be indeed blessed when I can deliver you once more to your mother. This is your horse, lady. I will help you to mount."

When they had gained their saddles, Isabel said: "We are well seated, sir knight, and can ride as fast as our horses will carry us."

"Then follow on with an easy rein, for the road is open and plain before us."

At the distance of a few miles they struck into the highway of the valley, and then rode swiftly on, stopping only once, at the ford of a mountain stream, to allow the horses to drink. The first gray streaks of dawn were tingeing the eastward horizon as they skirted the town of Lystra, and when they crossed the drawbridge of Montrose Castle the sun was just lifting its bright face above the adjacent heights.

Douglas and Bertram were in the court; and the youthful knight, when he had lifted Isabel from her saddle, took her to his bosom, and held her there, while a prayer of blessing went up from his grateful heart. And the stout esquire, emboldened by the example, allowed Margaret to take shelter within his encircling embrace, which she did, in the fulness of her pure love, without a thought of the many eyes that looked on.

And, a little later, there was a happy meeting in the great hall. Mother and child were clasped in each other's embrace, while those who stood around gazed upon the scene with moistened eyes. And words of thanks and blessing were spoken, while, for the season, surrounding dangers were all forgotten.

Refreshment was served, and then the restored girls, who could not conceal their fatigue, were led by the countess to their chamber. As soon as they were gone the mystic knight asked for his horse.

"You will not leave us so soon?" said Douglas in surprise.

"I must."

"But you need rest."

"I have no time for rest now. I must see Eupin of the Mountain before the sun reaches its meridian height; and perhaps after that I may find an hour for repose. But we may none of us call this present time our own. There is work at hand, be sure. We shall meet again ere long."

"Good sir," pleaded Douglas, as the knight was upon the point of turning away, "you will see the countess before you go. She will be greatly disappointed."

"No, no," replied the unknown, abruptly, "do not disturb her. It is better thus. I cannot wait. She has blessed me, and that is enough."

Thus speaking the strange knight turned from the hall, and in the court his horse was found in waiting. Without a word he vaulted to his saddle, and, with only a wave of the hand, he rode away. Douglas watched him until he had disappeared beyond the barbican, and then turning to the esquire, he said:

"The mystery of that man oppresses me. Bertram, who is he?"

"Sir Robert," returned the esquire, modestly and respectfully, "you do wrong to question me. Even allowing that I had become possessed of the secret, it would not be mine to divulge. You should know something of the sacredness of a knightly obligation. Let us be for the present content in knowing that he is our friend."

"Aye," continued Douglas, fervently, "Heaven knows he is! We owe him more than we can ever repay. And yet—I wish I knew to whom we are all so much indebted."

(To be continued.)

A FRENCH paper states that horses killed in action will be used as food for the troops.

THE German who killed the first Frenchman has received 30 thalers from Berlin.

A GREAT earthquake has been felt in the Gulf of Corinth. The cities of Amphissa and Galaxidi, as

well as several villages, have been destroyed. There are many killed and wounded.

THE ancient mansion of the Rhodes family at Great Houghton, Yorkshire—the parish from which Mr. R. M. Milnes takes his title of Lord Houghton—within whose walls the great Earl of Strafford wooed and won his bride—is now a village almshouse.

THE VEILED LADY.

BY THE

Author of "Fairleigh," "The Rival Sisters," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LX.

IN feverish expectancy the youth passed the night, sleeping little, and longing eagerly for the dawn of the day that was either to end all his perplexities, or plunge him deeper than before into a sea of inscrutable adventures and troubles. At length the morning came—bright, beautiful, and balmy—bearing on its breath a soothing freshness and odorous consolation, which impressed the impatient youth instinctively with a sense of hopefulness. He accepted the joy which the face of nature expressed so radiantly, as a favourable omen, presaging happiness to himself in the dim and uncertain future.

He breakfasted in his own room, with a lighter heart than he had known for long; and after the service was removed, Sylvia came to him, bearing a message from the Don, that he would be glad to see him in his private apartment.

Anxiously the youth accompanied Sylvia thither, but ere reaching the door Sylvia said:

"I must not enter with you, dear Enrique; my father wishes to have a long conversation with you alone. I will see you afterwards, dear Enrique."

And kissing him tenderly, the affectionate maiden withdrew, to tend her flowers in the conservatory, and afterwards to join Donna Eulalie.

A moment the youth paused; and then hurried onward to the Don's apartment, saying to himself:

"Now, at last, I shall know all—all!"

"My dear Enrique," said the Don, when he had entered, "I have sent for you because I think the time has come for you to be enlightened upon many things that have happened to you, and have seemed the work of some mysterious agency. I will not detain you very long with the narration of details, and as you must have a vivid recollection of the events themselves, there will be the less need for me to recapitulate them. Everything may be summed up briefly by saying that you have been from your very earliest boyhood the sport of a villain—a villain who has made you the instrument of inflicting a terrible revenge upon me. That villain is a kinsman of your own; he is the miscreant who calls himself Moran; but that is not his real name—he is your uncle, my brother—Gomez de Silva!"

"Oh, heaven! what is this I hear?" ejaculated the astonished youth. "Can it be that I have in truth found a father?"

"You have found a father, my son," replied the Don; "and I have found a son whom I had deemed lost to me for ever. But pray keep calm, dear Enrique, while I quickly pass over the necessary points of the story for your enlightenment."

And then the Don proceeded with his revelation.

"My brother Gomez and I were left heirs to my father Rodriguez's vast wealth—or rather I was left sole heir to the great inheritance; for my brother's share was left to him contingent upon an entire reformation of his conduct. He was my elder, and had always been wayward, wilful, and vicious from his boyhood up to manhood; his wild ways and reckless manner used to terrify not only me but our parents; and when my father died, he became a thousand times worse. In fact, dear Enrique, when he found that he had been put aside from the direct inheritance, which was to come in chief part to me, he became a perfect demon. He had been roaming about the world for many years, leading a wild and lawless life on the sea. I had married, and heaven had blessed me with a good wife in your dear mother Eulalie.

"When you were born, dear Enrique, my cup of joy was full. But ere long, sorrow and grief began to mingle in it. My brother Gomez came back one day from some lawless expedition—came back to find both our parents dead, and me left possessor of the bulk of our inheritance. His rage at this latter fact knew no bounds; he accused me of having treacherously supplanted him, and he swore horribly that if I did not instantly resign all to him, and accept as much of the property as he chose to assign me, that he would devote his life to wreaking a terrible vengeance upon me. In justice to you, my dear son, I could not consent to do this. You were my son and heir, and I could not disinherit you to gratify my base and unnatural brother. I therefore refused pos-

sitively to listen to such terms. He disappeared for a time, and I began to hope that he had met his death in some reckless adventure. I trust Heaven will pardon me for the hope. But I was mistaken. I soon had evidence that he was alive, and that his malignant resolution had not been forgotten. You, my Enrique, the dear delight of your mother's life and mine, suddenly disappeared. All our frantic efforts to discover you were vain. We were not left without some clue, however, as to him who had abducted you. My miscreant brother Gomez took care to have me informed that he had stolen you from us and carried you to a distant land, whence you should never return to us. That was the dagger with which he meant to stab us to the heart."

Here the Don paused, and the youth leaped up and threw his arms about his neck, murmuring:

"Dear father, Heaven has defeated him—I am restored to you again."

"Yes, my dear Enrique, Heaven has defeated him, Heaven has watched over you. And this brings me to the mysterious agency of the 'Veiled Lady.' This supernatural appearance is a peculiar tradition of the De Vegas. The apparition has for many generations attached itself to the person of the destined heir, and appeared in all circumstances of peril and danger as a guardian spirit. I will not attempt to explain the matter, Enrique. I cannot philosophise on such things. You have had evidence of this apparition yourself, my son, have you not?"

"Yes, yes; many times, when in peril and despair, the 'Veiled Lady' has appeared, and I have been delivered from danger, and have felt fresh hope," replied the youth, eagerly.

"By what extraordinary adventures or means you have been restored to the arms of your family, dear Enrique, we will not now discuss. It will be enough for all of us to enjoy the happiness springing from the fact that we are once more united. We have suffered much; we must enjoy our happiness thoroughly. Your life, dear Enrique, has been painful hitherto; it will be a joyful one in the future; for you are my only son, you will inherit great wealth—you bear a noble and distinguished name, and you are the destined husband of one who is the loveliest and dearest of her sex, one who idolises you, and will live only to make you happy."

The Don ceased for a moment, to give time to the tumult of joy in his heart to subside a little, and was about to resume when Enrique prevented him by saying:

"Dear father, say no more now; let us seek my mother and my sister. I am impatient to embrace them both."

"I will lead you to them, my Enrique; they are eagerly waiting for our coming. I know."

And the happy father and the joyful-hearted son repaired to the apartment in which Donna Eulalie and Sylvia were seated, eagerly waiting for the expected moment which should bring the one a son and the other a brother whom they loved most tenderly.

We will here draw the veil over the happiness of this reunited family. We will leave them in privacy, while we turn to the other actors in this story; for as great sorrow is always sacred, and should not be intruded on, so should great joy of this kind be left without intrusion too.

The youth's anticipations and presentiments of the foregoing day had thus been fully realised by the Don's recital. He was soon everywhere recognised as the recovered heir of the De Vegas; and ere long became the husband of the lovely Inez.

The Don made the occasion of the marriage of his son a day of such festivity as had never before been witnessed or heard of by those who partook of his social and lavish hospitality. It was a day set down as one to be remembered by all. And the happiness that followed the union of Enrique and Inez has been seldom equalled in this world of uncertain and shifting experiences. It has become even a proverb; and the highest felicity that can be wished for any youthful and loving hearts is that it may resemble that of Enrique and Inez de Vega.

CHAPTER LXI.

TURN we now to the fate of the other principal personages of this story.

For a moment Alice remained motionless upon the steps of the Wilton mansion, while strange thoughts of mingled wonder and distrust filled her mind.

During her hesitation her companion had gazed inquiringly, almost searchingly, upon her, and now advanced and pulled the bell, and in a moment it was answered by a servant, who ushered them into the hall. Then the lacquey threw open the library door, and with slow step Alice entered.

Mr. Wilton was seated as usual in his easy chair, with his eyes directed to the floor. He had nearly recovered from the effects of that terrible

night when the advent of that dark visitant had given his mind such a debilitating shock, though his face was somewhat paler than usual, and blue circles were perceptible beneath his eyes, showing loss of sleep, and continuous mental strain.

As he saw the heiress his face became animated, his drooping eyes suddenly grew bright, his lips broke into a smile, which gradually overspread his whole countenance, and arising and grasping her hands, he exclaimed in a soft voice:

"My dear Alice, the daughter of my dear, departed brother, at last I see you beneath my own roof, and your coming is like a ray of sunshine, for it is long since the voice of woman has made music in these rooms. Oh, my dear child, you will make me very happy with your sweet face, and graceful, gentle manner. Welcome, my dear niece; thrice welcome."

"I am very happy to see you. I have known that you were my uncle, and that was all. Excuse me if I say that you are not what I imagined you to be—do not misconstrue my words—I mean that you are more kind and gentle than I expected."

"Yes, yes, I understand you," sighed Mr. Wilton, with an air of dejection, "but we will not talk of that now. Lay aside your squire; sit down by my side, and let me look at you. There, that is right. Oh, my dear niece, it does me good to gaze into your tenderly beautiful face—to know that you are near me. I have long wished for this hour."

"And I am very glad, very happy, very thankful that I am here, for in the past week I have endured more sorrow and terror than words could tell you. I have been in a place—oh, I cannot describe it, the very thought makes me cold."

"You dear child," rejoined Mr. Wilton, with commiseration in his tone; "how you must have suffered; you, so delicate, and accustomed to a higher life. How very fortunate that I ascertained your absence."

"Oh, then, it was you who caused my rescue? Oh, how can I thank you?"

"Duty, prompted by love, requires only the pleasure of its performance for its reward. I was the instrument merely in the hands of Heaven, who gave me the knowledge and the power of using it," answered Mr. Wilton, very humbly.

"My sister has always nourished a dislike to me," he resumed, "why I know not. I make no accusation; all I will say is this, that I never harboured a recriminative feeling towards her, and have tried to conciliate her. She has deprived me of your society, without any reason, save her own desire."

"It is very strange," rejoined Alice, meditatively. "I thought that—"

"Messrs. Graves and Bowker!" said a servant, throwing open the door.

Mr. Wilton moved uneasily in his chair, an expression of blended anger and annoyance flitted over his features; then with a bland smile he arose, extended his hand to each in turn, and urbanely said:

"To what am I indebted, gentlemen, for the honour of this visit?"

Mr. Bowker mutely appealed to his companion, Mr. Graves ran his hand through his hair, and slowly answered:

"We have come to confer with you in regard to your niece."

"Ah?" quoth Mr. Wilton, interrogatively.

The expression upon the face of Mr. Graves became more serious, and he almost sternly asked:

"I suppose you are well aware of the dread event which has occurred?"

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Wilton, with a melancholy shake of his head; "but I am thankful that I was enabled to rescue my dear niece from the danger that menaced her. You see her before you safe; it has passed."

"I do not understand you, sir," remarked Mr. Graves, contracting his brows.

"Do not understand me?" repeated Mr. Wilton, wonderingly. "Surely you must, or at least ought to have been aware of the abduction of my dear niece, of her incarceration in a foul den in one of the lowest parts of the city, of her sufferings, and finally of my arduous, though at last—thank Heaven—successful efforts in rescuing her."

The gentlemen looked at each other, at Mr. Wilton, at Alice, and at length, after a few moments of reflection, Mr. Graves replied:

"This is all new to us; we know nothing of it."

"Excuse me, gentlemen," said Mr. Wilton, with a respectfully reproachful air, "if I venture to suggest that as trustees of her property and guardians of her welfare, you should pay a little more attention to her safety."

They exchanged glances slightly indignant, and Mr. Graves returned:

"Of our duties, Mr. Wilton, we have a perfect knowledge, and have thus far discharged them in good faith—but enough in regard to that. It is evi-

dent that you are not acquainted with another event, which is a piece of mysterious villainy."

Mr. Wilton elevated his eyebrows, gazed from one to the other, and at length responded:

"I have not the most remote idea of your meaning."

"Allow me to ask you, before we proceed further," interposed Mr. Bowker, "whether you are aware that your sister has been missing since the night upon which you informed me that your niece was conveyed away, and whom we now find here?"

Mr. Wilton lifted his eyes and hands in horror, and for a full minute gazed upon them astounded. Then, while the look of perplexity upon his face deepened, he exclaimed:

"Do I hear aright; my sister gone too? Impossible!"

"But nevertheless true," rejoined Mr. Graves. "I called there before coming here, and the servant gave me the information."

"This is what I was about to tell you when the gentleman entered," said Alice, for the first time speaking.

Mr. Wilton seemed engrossed with thought, and noticed not her words. In a moment he turned towards Mr. Graves and eagerly queried:

"Have you no clue, no idea to work upon?"

"Alas, none!" answered Mr. Graves. "We are not sure that she was abducted, but it is the most reasonable supposition."

The trustees and Mr. Wilton conversed together for a few moments, and then Mr. Graves said, addressing Alice:

"It would doubtless be more pleasant to you to remain with a relative than to make your home with those who are comparative strangers to you. Accordingly we have concluded to allow you to stay here, knowing that your uncle will do all in his power to make you happy."

"Oh, thank you, gentlemen!" exclaimed Mr. Wilton fervently. "I assure you that your confidence is not misplaced. Everything that love can suggest shall be done for her. I should be perfectly happy now if I knew that my unfortunate sister was safe."

"And this unselfish, forgiving man," thought Alice, "is he whom Miss Angelina so abused. What injustice there is in this world!"

"Then all questions are settled," remarked Mr. Graves, arising, "and as we have no further business, we will bid you good evening."

For some time Mr. Wilton remained in conversation with his niece on the subject of her strange experiences, and his sister's mysterious disappearance; and eventually rang for a maid servant, who attended Alice to her room.

Mr. Wilton little dreamed of the terrible fate which had even then befallen his alienated sister.

CHAPTER LXII.

It will be remembered that the intrepid Dikely was last left in the power of the villain Moran.

The latter, with the fire of rage glaring from his steely eyes, and his features wreathed in a grin of fiendish malignity, regarded in silence for a moment the supine and fettered form of his victim; then he once more raised the knife.

"You don't quail yet!" hissed the miscreant, in a voice quivering with wrath; "but you shall, ha, ha-a, you shall!"

Then the villain ascended to the deck, and shouted, "Mr. Kelly!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" and the mate approached.

"Mr. Kelly, pipe all hands, weigh anchor, shake out canvas, and stand out to sea; take the helm yourself!"

The mate started with surprise, and for once thrown off his guard, stammered:

"Do you really mean—"

"What the fiend do you mean, sir?" thundered Moran. "Pass those orders; do as I tell you—do you hear, sir?"

The mate said no more, but summoned the crew, and then gave the orders, which were executed with all possible haste.

Slowly the schooner moved through the water, under the impetus of a gentle breeze, and stood out to sea.

All this Moran enjoyed with the keenest relish of his fierce disposition, and as the schooner moved on and obtained more sea-room, he approached the mate, who stood at the wheel, tapping him jocosely on the shoulder, the villain's eyes assuming a glitter almost insane.

"You are disposed to be merry, captain," responded the mate, turning his head.

"Yes, I'll soon be merry!" came in harsh, creaking tones from Moran's lips. "I'll soon have a triumph, the furnace hot—hot I say?"

A moment the mate was silent, then in as steady a voice as he could command, he rejoined:

"Both the utensils are in the caboose; they have been heated as you desired."

"In the caboose, are they?—but who told you to keep them there? Have them carried to the hold, quick!"

Thankful to rid himself of the society of the truculent villain for a short time even, the mate hurried away, and had the hot furnace placed in the hold.

Then the monster Moran descended the ladder, and ordered the mate down after him.

For a moment Moran gazed at the steady, hazy flare of the charcoal, while his face grew frightfully hideous, and his teeth grated together; then, turning towards Dikely, he articulated in sibilant tones:

"You see the fire—the blazing fire; and there is the branding iron, and here you are; ha! ha! ha!"

Oh, what lightning gleams of honest anger and supreme scorn shot from the clear shining eyes of the pinioned Dikely! while the muscles of his face twitched nervously, and he uttered the words:

"There is an hour yet to come! Be I dead or alive you shall receive your reward!"

Moran bent over the furnace, and drew therefrom the iron, which was of a scorching heat, and held the instrument of torture within a few inches of his victim's face.

No longer could the mate endure the sight. His noble nature asserted itself; his eyes flashed; he darted towards Moran, seized the iron, and cried:

"This shall not be—I swear it!"

Amazement held Moran a moment speechless; then with a howl of mingled rage and mortification he drew his dagger, swung his arm around his head, and sprang upon the mate.

By a quick and skilful motion the officer eluded the blow, leaped to the left, caught Moran's wrist from beneath, twisted it until the veins protruded, and then holding a pistol to his head, exclaimed:

"Captain! I have sailed with you for years, I have been your companion and assistant in many a lawless scheme, but I will not stand by and see a brave man tortured! I am wicked, but I will not—I swear I will not—allow such an outrage as this to proceed!"

"Fiends! fiends!" gasped Moran. "You shall die for this! Starboard watch below! Mutiny, mutiny!"

A rushing of heavy feet was heard on the deck above, and the next instant a dozen faces were peering down upon them.

"Call the second mate!" cried Moran, in a voice choked with anger. "Come down here, you lubbers, you dolts, and iron this mutineer!"

"We care not for danger, we care not for blood; but this torture shall not go on!" was the answer from every lip.

"Captain," said the mate, in a tone of calm resolution, "every man on board this vessel is determined that this worst of crimes shall cease. You may drown him, you may shoot him, you may poison him, but you shall not inflict such cruelty upon him; were he a snivelling coward it would be different, but a brave man deserves respect for his bravery! You know very well that it is not best to make enemies of me and the whole crew."

Moran was well aware that he was powerless, that to make enemies of his men would be to lose all he had striven for, and although it enraged him he was compelled to yield, and in tones of suppressed wrath he replied:

"I am and will be captain here—let the fool go!"

The mate let go his hold, restored his pistol, and then he went above.

Moran ground his teeth and clenched his hands, and darting a glance of the most intense hate towards Dikely, indicative of future revenge, he also ascended to the deck, and for more than an hour paced restlessly from stern to stern. At length he paused, and commanded in hard, ringing tones:

"Mr. Kelly, order a ball and chain to be hung around the prisoner's neck, and have him brought on deck immediately."

"Very well, sir," returned the mate, and forthwith gave the desired order.

In a short time Dikely appeared, his arms still pinioned, but his other limbs free. In front of him were two stout sailors, who bent beneath the weight of the iron ball which depended from a chain fastened to a metallic collar which encircled his neck.

Only too well the heroic Dikely knew the dread significance of these preparations, knew that his life was about to end, and that the rolling waves would soon receive his body. And yet he trembled not, but with the knowledge that his life had been pure, good, and upright, and that his conscience was clear, he moved towards the bulwarks and gazed undismayed into the darkness.

For a short time Moran regarded him with a glance of malignant triumph, and then came the words:

"Up with him!—let him stand upon the gunwale!" ordered Moran, in a voice of wicked glee.

It was obeyed; death and that fearless man were soon to meet; a moment, perhaps, and he would be in eternity.

A cry of exultation broke from Moran's lips accompanied with the appalling words:

"Down with him! Down where the sword-fish play! down—down!"

The very air seemed to tremble, demons in fearful chorus seemed repeating those dreadful words, when the spell of horror was sundered by a creaking of chains, a plunge, a furious lashing of waters, and the noble Dikely disappeared beneath the black waters' eddying whirl.

"Ha, ha-a!" rang out in shrill tones that awful laugh, "he's gone—ha! ha! ha!"

And Moran darted down the companion-way, and entered the cabin, where with faces of pallid hue, and their hearts lying heavy within their breasts, sat Miss Angelina and her companion. The hours of mingled dread and sorrow which they had experienced had given to their features a listless, careworn look, and to their eyes a dull, sad light.

Approaching the ladies, while his features expressed scorn, triumph, and wicked glee, Moran ironically said:

"How now, my fair ones? Fair! ha-a, as fair as age and ill-temper can make you! But you look better than you did; life on the 'Hawk' will make beauties of you soon."

The mysterious working of fate, however, had decreed a different result—both for the villain Moran himself, for the helpless and unoffending Miss Angelina and her companion, and the reckless men whom Moran had gathered about him and made the instruments of his villainy.

The mocking expressions that had just left his lips were the last words the villain was doomed to utter. Ere he had ceased speaking, a terrific explosion shattered the "Hawk" from stem to stern—from keel to main truck, in a mingled mass of splintered timbers and human bodies.

The villain had ordered the heated furnace for torturing Dikely to be taken into the hold; and here, unnoticed at the moment, a barrel of petroleum oil had been overturned in the brief struggle with the mate; the awfully explosive fluid had trickled into connection with the fiery furnace, and in an instant destruction followed to all on board the luckless "Hawk." Thus the miscreant Moran became the instrument of his own doom.

We have only a few more words to add. Mr. Wilton never knew what had been the awful fate of his sister Angelina and her companion; and after a year from the time of Alice entering the Wilton mansion as her settled place of residence, she left it as the bride of Arthur, whom the investigations set on foot by Captain and Mrs. Linwood had proved to be their own son, whom they had imagined to have been lost at sea.

Mr. Smilesott never reappeared. It may have been that he also had been conveyed on board the "Hawk" by the miscreant Moran, and had shared the sudden fate of the villain, and his accomplices and victims. Mr. Wilton's foppish son ended his useless life with his own hand while in a state of mental madness induced by his wild dissipations; and Mr. Wilton, thus relieved from his presence, seemed to become a new man, and earnestly devoted himself to secure the happiness of his niece and her husband. The marriage path of these young people, propitious fortune fairly strewn with roses. Their life was only less equal in happiness to that of Enrique and Inez—over whom no shadow of grief or trouble ever rested, from whom danger or disaster kept aloof, and from whom consequently the "Veiled Lady" became for ever hidden.

THE END.

THE Lords of the Admiralty have decided upon making some valuable additions to the iron-clad navy, and have called upon the leading shipbuilding firms in the United Kingdom to tender for the construction of four vessels of the Scourge class. It is also intended, we believe, to build two other ships similar to the Cerberus. We have reason to believe that, even if the war now being waged on the Continent has an early termination, the flying squadron, which was to have left our shores in October, will not now be despatched. Public confidence has received a shock, and cannot be easily restored. In a trial of sailing recently the Ropulse showed that she had the heels of the whole coastguard squadron, beating the Achilles, which has obtained a celebrity as having beaten the fastest iron-clad under sail of the former Channel squadron. It has been rumoured that Mr. Swainson, the senior clerk of the Admiralty, who passed Mr. Jones's unfounded claim for compensation, has been fined 100*l.*, and his junior, Mr. Dormer, has been mulcted

in 20L for his share in the transaction; but it is not certain if Mr. Baxter has been called upon to furnish his quota to the loss which the public has been called upon to sustain for his laches in the transaction.

MYSTERY OF THE BLACK DIAMOND.

CHAPTER XL.

THE pale little governess never paused till she had brought Lady Violet beyond the range of all eyes save her own, into a little alcove, which was shut from the rest of the room by a heavy curtain of crimson silk.

Then she said, softly:

"I think, my dear, the time has come for the solving of all your doubts. Sir Jasper Townley is here."

She waited a moment, watching my lady's white face anxiously, and added:

"He was on his way to Copeland, where he has some property, but got belated, and came here for the night. Lady Evelyn has made him promise to remain over to-morrow, it being Christmas Day."

"You are a thoughtful friend," Lady Violet said, with a little hysterical sob; "you brought me here to save me the shock of hearing this too suddenly."

"Dear Lady Violet, don't give way, now," as my lady's head drooped upon her faithful shoulder; "he may enter the drawing-room any moment."

Lady Violet looked up in a sort of fright, her hands both pressed upon her heaving bosom.

"It seems to me my heart will burst," she said.

"Perhaps you had better excuse yourself and retire to your own apartments," suggested Miss Miggs. "I could remain, and come to you after a while."

Lady Violet shook her head. Her composure was already returning.

"I will stay and see him myself," she said, a little proudly; "only be you near me, dear. It gives me such courage to feel I have you to fall back upon."

The tender-hearted little governess had some ado to keep down her tears at this pathetic outburst.

It had been a busy day at the Nest, and busy hands were still twining evergreens in various parts of the mansion.

My lady and her faithful friend joined one of these groups.

But while their fingers wrought their hearts were full, and they watched for the entrance of the new-comer.

Lady Evelyn came presently to where they sat about a table heaped with holly. She was leaning upon the arm of a stranger—a young man, tall and fair, with blue eyes and waving brown hair.

"Sir Jasper Townley," she introduced him to Lady Violet and Miss Miggs.

As my lady acknowledged the introduction her great eyes swept the stranger's face like a flash.

"Perhaps you have met Sir Jasper before?" questioned Lady Evelyn, in some surprise, for it was impossible for the young countess to conceal her agitation.

"I thought—I did not know Sir Jasper was so young a man," she stammered.

"You knew my father, perhaps," the young man said, gravely. "I received but three days ago news of his death in an Arab expedition."

Lady Violet bent her head, and in courteous respect for an agitation whose cause they could not even guess at, Sir Jasper and Lady Evelyn moved on.

An hour later, as Sir Jasper crossed the hall alone, Miss Miggs glided to his side and spoke a few low words in an undertone.

The young baronet looked surprised, but he turned at once with her, and was conducted to a small waiting-room where he found the youthful Countess of Eaglescliffe, quite restored by this time to her usual proud self-possession.

Miss Miggs closed the door, remaining herself, while Lady Violet calmly removed from her neck the chain which held her wedding ring, and laid it upon the table beside which she stood.

"Will you oblige me, Sir Jasper, by examining this ring and telling me if you ever saw it before?" Sir Jasper obeyed her, in some excitement.

Touching the concealed spring for which my lady and Miss Miggs had searched in vain, he showed her under the stone the motto of his house, *Semper paratus*, wrought in minute diamonds.

His look expressed unbounded amazement.

"The last time I saw this ring," he said, "it was on my father's finger."

He gravely returned it to her, asking no questions,

though it evidently cost him no little to keep silent Half-an-hour after, in her own apartment, Lady Violet threw herself into the arms of her faithful Miggs, passionately sobbing.

"Don't say one word to unsettle me, dear," she cried. "I am sure now it was that old man I married that night, and he is dead, and I am free."

The little governess clasped her close, without speaking.

"I know what that silence means," sobbed Lady Violet. "You think there is a shadow of a doubt yet. Granted that there is such a doubt, his son will solve it for me. When he comes to examine his father's papers, he will, without doubt, find some record of so singular an event among them, and that will settle it."

"Meanwhile you will wait?" questioned Miggs, timidly.

"Wait?"

My lady lifted her face, glowing with blushes and sparkling with tears.

"Do you mean that I may not put poor Roy out of his misery till then? I believe he does love me still. I believe he adores me, Heaven bless him!"

"Still you will wait?" Miggs hesitated, "for both your sakes."

The young countess refused to answer her.

"Go to bed, now; I'm tired."

Miggs waited still.

"My dear," she began, but my lady drowned what she would have said with the tinkle of the golden bell, and Fidele, entering to tend upon her mistress, finished the discussion.

"I should like to give myself to him for a Christmas present," Lady Violet mused, with a tender smile, as she sank to sleep that night.

Christmas morning was a bright one.

Lady Violet descended to breakfast with an unwonted light in her beautiful eyes, an unusual smile on her lovely lips. She was early. Only one person was before her. He—Gilderoy Evelyn—stood looking forth upon the wintry landscape. His brow was clouded, and he merely bowed and said "Good morning," very coldly, in response to her ladyship's almost eager greeting.

His aunt had told him of Lady Violet's extraordinary agitation at sight of Sir Jasper, and he had interpreted her emotion in the wayward fashion peculiar to a lover.

The young countess' carmine cheek had taken a deeper hue at sight of him. She had been ready to give him her hand in token of forgetfulness of the difference over-night, but his chill voice, his averted looks, struck cold to her heart.

At this moment Sir Jasper entered, and she shook hands with him most cordially.

Sir Jasper had been bound to silence concerning the revelations of the evening before, so he only pressed my lady's hand, and warmly expressed his pleasure at meeting her.

Captain Evelyn heard him with an angry flush rising in his dark cheek, which the young countess was quick to notice.

She smiled behind her hand.

"It is you who are jealous now, my fine Roy," she thought. "Let us see if you bear it any better than I did. You are so near happiness, if you only knew it, that you can afford to be patient."

And then, without meaning any hypocrisy, she sat down to the waiting breakfast with Sir Jasper, and talked lightly and pleasantly with him, as Gilderoy Evelyn had seldom seen her.

It was some time before any one else joined the three in the breakfast room, and the gloomy young guardsman sat a little apart, pretending to eat, but only watching his queenly love while she toyed daintily with the wing of a broiled bird, or sipped the chocolate from her golden spoon, and chatted merrily with Sir Jasper.

A cloud had lifted from my lady's brow—some weight was off her heart. What was it?

"It must be Sir Jasper's coming which has so gladdened her," thought Evelyn. "If she loves him it is indeed madness in me to hope ever to win her. How handsome he is, and how wittily he talks. I'm a dull fellow myself."

Lady Violet included him in the conversation from time to time, trying to win him from his moodiness, till Sir Jasper archly whispered her, that the captain must be excused, he had fallen out with Miss Warleigh, and could not be expected to smile on the rest of the world while her countenance was averted.

Lady Violet watched her opportunity, and the first time she encountered Captain Evelyn alone, extended her hand frankly.

"Let us be friends," she said, with her heart throbbing.

To her amazement he folded his arms in cold hauteur, and said, as he passed her:

"Never! my lady."

The young countess flushed with anger.

"Come, come," she said to herself, as she walked swiftly in the opposite direction, "this is carrying matters quite too far. Whatever a lady does, a gentleman is not justified in being rude to her. Ah! it is nothing but vexation and weariness in this world, I do believe. How handsome he looked, and involuntarily she glanced over her shoulder, and encountered Captain Evelyn's gaze, also turned back upon her. In another moment he had retraced his steps, and was at her side, repentant emotion in every lineament of his manly, speaking face.

"Lady Violet," he said, hurriedly, "I beg your pardon on my knees, and I wish you every happiness with the man of your choice."

He pressed his lips once passionately to her hand, and was gone again, before she had rallied from her confusion and amazement.

A light broke over her face as she pondered his last words.

"Jealous still," she thought, smiling. "My handsome, proud Roy, you shall never be jealous of me again. I love you too well to put such bitter pain upon your loyal, princely heart. Before I sleep, my darling, you shall know all, my unworthiness as well as my love."

But my lady's calculations were destined to non-fulfilment, like most human anticipations.

The day passed and she had no opportunity to address Captain Evelyn one word in private.

A little before dark a communication came to her from the Cliffe, brought by her own most-trusted groom, Hubert, who, as he gave her the letter, said:

"The gentleman insisted so that it was important, that I have brought a carriage, should you wish to go to the Park to-night, as he said you would, my lady, after you had read his letter."

Lady Violet laughed, and shook her graceful head in very buoyancy of soul. There could be nothing now to so seriously concern her as that.

But the laugh froze on her lips, as her eyes fell on the seal of her letter. It bore the impress of a drawn sword, with the same motto that blazed in diamond letters within her wedding ring.

The missive was signed "Sir Jasper Townley."

It went on to state that the writer, having just returned from a long sojourn abroad, and being compelled by peculiar circumstances to depart again almost immediately, had, nevertheless, at the earnest insistence of her ladyship's lawyers, come to Eaglescliffe for an hour's interview with her. He there fore waited her pleasure at the Cliffe, being absolutely compelled to return to London by the night express, which was due at nine p.m., and naturally concluding that she would prefer seeing him there to meeting him at the Nest.

My lady read the letter through, then she rang the bell, and asked that Sir Jasper Townley might be told that she would like to speak with him a moment.

Word came back that Sir Jasper had gone—had been summoned away on some important business—two hours before.

My lady hesitated, compressing her pale lips as she glanced over the letter again.

"Can there have been a mistake?" she thought.

"Would the son have been readily deceived concerning the death of his own father? or was he alive, after all?"

Hubert waited still. She turned to him.

"You saw this man," she questioned—"this gentleman? What is he like?"

"He is not a young man, my lady. His hair and his beard are white; he has blue eyes, and is tall."

"And what did he call himself to you?"

"He said he was Sir Jasper Townley?"

"That will do. I will go with you."

Lady Violet left the room with a swift, unwavering step. All the pride, the indomitable spirit of those lords of Eaglescliffe from whom she was descended thrilled her soul and fired her eye in this strange emergency.

"This shall end uncertainty," she said to herself, sternly.

She made her excuses to Lady Evelyn promptly and decidedly, in spite of her consternation.

Then she fitted away to her chamber, to don her wrappings for the cold ride to the Cliffe.

Miss Miggs joined her there. Fidele was left to pack and follow on the morrow.

Miggs went with the young countess that night. Captain Evelyn came forward, booted and spurred for riding, as they were entering the carriage.

"I could not think of permitting you to ride all that distance—in the night, too—protected only by servants," he explained, in answer to Lady Violet's surprise.

My lady protested eagerly against such attendance—so eagerly, indeed, that he affected to yield the point, and remain behind.

Not till they were in the carriage, with the cold, dark December night closing round them, did Lady Violet explain to her faithful friend what had happened.

The little governess carefully examined Sir Jasper's letter by the light of the carriage lamps.

"Of course, he will have brought some sort of credentials from your lawyers," she remarked, as she gravely folded it.

As the carriage drew up at the lodge gates, a horseman swept forward into the light of the lamps.

"Good-night, Lady Violet," said the voice of Captain Evelyn, albeit not in very cheerful tones, and wheeling his horse swiftly, he galloped away again.

"Good-night and thank you," she called after him, but it is doubtful if he heard.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

A STRONG HINT.

"Does your arm pain you, sir?" asked a lady of a gentleman who had seated himself near her in a mixed assembly, and thrown his arm across the back of her chair and touched her neck.

"No, miss, it don't, but why do you ask?"

"I noticed it was out of its place, sir, that's all." The arm was removed.

A DIG AT THE DOCTORS.—A wag said:—"When my wife was very ill I called an Allopathic physician; she got no better. I then called a Homopath, and she 'mended' a little. One day he broke his leg, and couldn't come at all; then she got well!"

POOR FELLOW.—A young gentleman, in describing the effects of his first walk, says that for fifteen minutes he appeared to be swimming in a sea of rose leaves with a blue angel. This soon changed, he says, to a delirium of peacock feathers, in which his brains got so mixed with low-necked frocks, musk, and melody, that he has fed on flutes ever since.

THREE things a lady cannot do:—1. She cannot pass a millinery shop without stopping. 2. She cannot see a piece of lace without asking its price. 3. She cannot see a baby without kissing it. A lady turns the table on the gentlemen, as follows:—Three things a gentleman cannot do: 1. He cannot go through the house and shut the doors after him. 2. He cannot have a shirt made to suit him. 3. He can never be satisfied with the ladies' fashions.

NOT TO BE FOILED.

In Tamaqua, the "Mountain City" of Pennsylvania, has resided for many years an old colored individual, by occupation a barber, who was one day complaining of his sufferings from dyspepsia, and attributed his ailment to the fact of having no teeth, by which he was unable properly to masticate his food.

"Well, Simon," said a bystander, "why don't you get a set of false teeth? They wouldn't cost you much."

"False teef!" exclaimed Simon; "Oh no, sah! no you don't! I've had jest all de teef I want in my mouf! I've suffered more wid de toofache den I ever did wid de 'speasy, an' I was glad enuf to git shet of my teef! You don't git no mo' teef into my mouf—no, sah!"

A COMPLIMENT.

The Bishop preached. The congregation subsequently requested his Lordship to publish his sermon.

His lordship was delighted.

"And so," said he, with jocosely affability to the senior churchwarden, "the people were very well pleased? Eh?"

"Well, you see, your lordship," replied the official, "our folks would like to know summat about it; and—"

"Ah!" interposed the bishop, complacently, "I see; they'd like to read it at home."

"Well, your lordship, that's just what they would like; 'cos—" (Here he paused, and then added, confidentially) "it wor very hot weather, you see, and so—when your lordship wor preachin' they were all asleep!"—*Punch*.

FOUR-WHEELER VERSUS HANSON.

Gentleman: "Now, then, crawler, I didn't hail you! I hailed the Hanson. So take that 'fever-box' of yours out of the way!"

Four-Wheeler: "Fever-box, indeed! Ah! that's just your mistake! I takes the patients to the hospital when the disease is only just beginning, and there ain't yet no infection. He takes 'em out for a airing just when they begins to get convalescent."—*Punch*.

IN A GREAT STATE OF ALARM.—There is one class of objects which always makes Mrs. Malaprop feel very nervous when she goes to the Kensington Museum—the terror cottas.—*Punch*.

HIGHLY RESPECTABLE LIQUOR.—"Claret Medoc, with bottled character." So says a placard in a shop-window. We all know that it is as important for a wine to have a character as it is for a servant; but many of us now learn for the first time that it can be bottled. How is the thing done; for this feat, this new bottle-trick, seems almost to be beyond even modern ingenuity, and ought certainly, if practicable, to be a patented invention? Let us hope one thing, that if the wine's character is bottled, it is not "corked" also.—*Punch*.

THE Tower of London is to be put in a state of defence. Half-a-crown will, in future, be charged for admission. This will protect it against all possible invasion.—*Toma hawk*.

VERY IMPERTINENT OF HIM.

Juvenile Inhabitant of Popular Watering-place (gravely): "Can you tell me what the rent of them 'ouses is, sir?"

Mr. Butterfink (just arrived): "Rent? Why, what should I know about them?"

Boy (at a safe distance): "Oh, I beg yer pardon, I thought the whole town belonged to yer!"—*Judy*.

We have the best reason for believing that with the extra two millions just voted in hand, the disgraceful episode at which, on a recent occasion, a battery of Horse Artillery had to borrow animals from another brigade before it could appear on parade, will not be repeated. Mr. Cardwell has given orders that in future should a battery be ordered to disport itself in heavy marching order, and find itself short of horses, they are to be forthwith procured from the nearest livery stable, at half-a-crown an hour.—*Toma hawk*.

THE COTTAGE BY THE SHORE.

Oh, there I'd pitch my pilgrim tent,
My heart doth love it well;
There innocence and calm content

For evermore might dwell.

The rose in damask blushes,

By the hospitable door,

And sunset's splendour flushes

The cottage by the shore.

The cherry waves its graceful bough

Athwart the well-tilled field,

There autumn's pride and summer's show,

A cornucopia yield.

I love to sit at eventide,

And gaze the waters o'er—

The waters that stretch out beside

The cottage by the shore;

To watch the ripples gliding past,

Each like a silver shell,

Each burnished brighter than the last,

Where sunset's glories fell;

Where day's bright banner, bathed in gold,

Bends low the waters o'er,

And evening's loving pinions fold

The cottage by the shore.

M. J. B.

GEMS.

We cannot conquer fate and necessity, yet we can yield to them in such a manner as to be greater than if we could.

THERE is a chord running through all the sounds of creation; but the ear of love alone can distinguish it.

LITTLE things should not be despised; for many threads will bind an elephant, and many drops will make a river.

CORRECTION does much, but encouragement will do more. Encouragement after censure is like the sun after a shower.

We should more seldom take offence at each other if we looked oftener at the why than the what.

WITH the wicked, as with a bad dog, silence is more formidable than noise.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

JOINING PARCHMENT PAPER.—To join the smooth surfaces of parchment paper to other paper, wood, pasteboard, etc., the surface of the parchment must first be moistened with alcohol or brandy, and then pressed whilst still moist upon the glue or paste. When two pieces of parchment are to be joined, both must be moistened in this way. It is said that the paper will sooner tear than separate where it has been thus fastened together. Another way is to put a thin piece of paper between the surfaces of parchment and apply the paste. This forms a firm joint and can with difficulty be separated. Glue and

flour paste are best adapted for uniting surfaces of parchment.

AMMONIA.—There can be but very little doubt that the presence of ammonia in water is not altogether unimportant in its influence on vegetable life; nor is it unlikely but that the excessively invigorating effect produced on vegetation by a shower of rain may to a certain extent be due to its presence. Plants seem to revive more rapidly when sprinkled with water to which has been added a trace of ammonia solution, than when common water has been employed.

LEAD-FOIL IN WOUNDS.—Marshal Vaillant has drawn the attention of the Paris Academy of Sciences to a proposal of Professor Burggrave for the adoption of lead-foil in place of lint. The lead is made to adhere to the flesh by some glutinous substance; and it is said that it has been found highly effective in many cases of workmen injured in factories. Lead is both cool and soft to the skin, and the sulphate of lead which is formed prevents putrefaction. Another great recommendation is, that the wound may be cooled, without removing the lead, by merely wetting the bandage with water; and thus the entrance of infected air, and consequently of morbid germs, is entirely prevented. In connection with this subject, it may be mentioned, that the war has brought into use a new kind of bandage or compress, combined with lint. French lint is not scraped, like ours, but merely old linen unravelled; that is to say, it consists of masses of thread, like long-piled plush, on a portion of their surface; so that the bandage and lint are combined, and ready for instant application. It is proposed to give every soldier in the French army one of these bands, with the end dipped in a solution of perchloride of iron, thus forming a compress against hemorrhage as well as a lint bandage.

MISCELLANEOUS.

HER MAJESTY the Queen has subscribed 500*l.* to the fund for the relief of the sick and wounded in the war.

THE MONT CENIS RAILWAY COMPANY.—Vice-Chancellor Malins has had before him a petition to wind up this company, on the ground that their railway has been worked at a loss, the expenses of working it in the winter months being greater than the profits earned by working it in the summer months. By consent of the parties, Mr. James Atkinson Longreach, the present manager of the company, has been appointed provisional liquidator, and the rest of the petition has been ordered to stand over till November.

NEW ACT ON THE MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.—By the Act 39 and 40 George III., c. 14, Parliament may be summoned by proclamation on any day not less than 14 days from the day of proclamation; and it is, by a statute passed on the 9th ult., declared to be expedient to shorten the period of 14 days. Parliament may now be summoned by a Royal proclamation to meet on any day not less than six days from the date of such proclamation, and six days to be substituted for 14 days.

HOW TO PREVENT HORSES JUMPING.—Fit the horse with a good firm strap halter, with a strap stitched to come over the eyes. Cut holes in this strap over each eye; over these eye-holes put fine wire-cloth, supported nicely by wires, so that it cannot possibly touch the eyes. Before a horse attempts to jump a fence, he will put his head over to calculate the height and distance he is about to jump; but by looking through the wire-cloth everything is so magnified, that he is disconcerted, and is afraid to jump.

CARE OF THE WOUNDED.—Throughout Germany, from the Rhine to Berlin, and further east, the most careful preparations have been made for the reception and transport of the wounded. As, to prevent typhus and other epidemical diseases, the sick and wounded are to be distributed over a wide area, it was necessary to have everything in readiness for their conveyance from spot to spot. For this purpose localities have been hired in the towns on the route, and converted into hospitals or temporary resting-places for the sufferers. How extensively this system has been carried out may be inferred from the fact that hospitals for several thousands are being formed at Berlin, at a distance of nearly six hundred miles from the battle-fields; and that all the way from Scharbruck to that capital the rooms in which the unfortunate travellers will rest are already fitted up and waiting their arrival. To inform any doctor, who may treat an invalid, of the view taken of his case by the medical man who saw him first, a label will be attached to the sufferer's neck, describing symptoms, etc. In addition to this, every soldier in the army has a sort of ticket on his person, containing the name of his regiment, battalion, and company, with a number by which his identity can be easily ascertained.

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menades as are held at the Botanical Society's or Horticultural Gardens.

ALF. W.—The particular branch of the service that will answer your purpose is the Army Service Corps. Skilled men, such as bakers, butchers, and carpenters, or others likely to be useful, have a chance of earning working pay in addition to regimental pay. Recruiting is now going on at Woolwich; the minimum height is five feet three-and-a-quarter inches, measurement round the chest 34 inches, and the age varies from seventeen to twenty-eight.

I. M.—1. The satin should be scoured with a mixture composed of soft soap, honey, white of egg, and gin. After scouring, wipe the mixture off with a sponge and clean cold water. Then iron whilst damp. 2. There is not the least impropriety in taking the arm of a gentleman who is not your lover. As far as fashion goes, however, it is the custom in these days for ladies in general to walk without the support they were glad to have in times gone by. In the case of lovers, the gentleman often now takes the lady's arm.

M. S. O.—To make blacking for boots and shoes, mix an ounce of ivory black with an ounce of treacle and one-third of a pint of vinegar. Then make a separate mixture of three drachms of linseed oil and three drachms of oil of vitriol; afterwards, add the two mixtures together. To make black writing-ink, boil a pound of bruised galls in a gallon of water. Let them simmer gently for three or four hours, and add during that time a little more water to supply the loss caused by evaporation. Strain this decoction, and add to it half-a-pound of gum and half-a-pound of sulphate of iron, each having been previously dissolved in a pint of water.

THE HARDER PART.

Ho, ye who at the avell toil,
And strike the sturdy blow;
Who feel the blood within you boil
Before its furnace glow—
Ne'er envy him whose life is passed
As one long holiday,
For know it is the harder part
To idle life away.

Ho, ye who on the rugged farm
Contend with harrow and plough;
To wrest from out earth's bosom warm
The fruits of honest toil,
Ne'er envy him whose life is passed
In idleness and play,
For know it is the harder task
To idle life away.

Ho, ye who rack the weary brain
In study hard and long,
That ye perhaps at last may gain
The honour of a song—
Though wearily the time is passed
As work ye day by day,
Yet his is still the harder task
Who idles life away.
And so, whatever be your work,
Perform it with a will,
And never from its duties shirk,
Nor soul with envy fill;
For that which makes the happy hour
Is work, not foolish play,
And freedom from that harder part
Of idling life away.

S. A. M.

M. B. W.—The schoolmaster has indeed been abroad for some time, but in future he will be much more busy than he has been. In addition to the direct benefits which will be conferred upon the people by the new Educational Act, it is probable that from it may arise other beneficial influences. Such a measure is calculated to raise the tone of those who do not come within its circle, and to shed upon those for whom it is especially intended, the humanizing influence of sympathy. That the State will in future have some care for those little ones, who, through no fault of their own, have been cruelly left in the gutter, is one of the most hopeful signs of the times. We quite appreciate your views, but have no space for your letter.

ZAMPA.—Very likely you are right. What is called poetical justice is a favourite theory with many whose aphorisms bear some resemblance to Shakespeare's saying: "The whirligig of time brings about its revenges." We prefer, however, that old father Time should himself manage such matters. Natural curiosity is often evoked by the wonderful interweaving of the chains of circumstances by which such catastrophes are produced, but happy the man who is never entangled in them. Anything approaching to revenge is an evil and dastardly spirit, condemned alike by the highest authority and by all right-thinking persons.

FERNIGORE.—There must be something faulty in the construction of your thermometer; either the air has not been expelled from the tube or there has been a defect in the regulation, or some other matter which can only be discovered by inspection. The difference in the indications is much greater than what you appear to suppose. Whether the liquid be oil, spirit, or water, the indications are below mercury as follows: Oil, 2 deg., 25 Fahrenheit; spirit, 11 deg., 42 Fahr.; water, 43 deg., 57 Fahr. There is another difficulty to which your water thermometer will be subject in winter, even if you now get it adjusted, on account of the peculiar properties of water, for if the top of the column be at 50 degs. Fahr., it will be impossible to know whether the temperature is 50 degs. or 30 degs., the expansion of the water being nearly equal at equal distances within ten degrees above and below 40 degrees of the scale. The name of the other instrument you enquire for is an Actinometer or radiating Thermometer.

B. M. C.—There are some well-authenticated cases on record of the spontaneous combustion of the human frame, and that such a phenomenon is possible is admitted by the best writers on medical jurisprudence of the present day. The theory that this combustion is owing to the impregnation of the tissues of the body with alcohol has been discarded, and in its stead the supposition has been propounded that the catastrophe

has arisen from inflammable gases, such as carburetted and phosphuretted hydrogen, generated in the body. And yet it is stated that most of the individuals who have thus perished were for a long time addicted to the use of ardent spirits. Such a combustion proceeds with great rapidity in contradistinction to the slow progress of the combustion of a human body by external agents. Water will not extinguish the flames which proceed from spontaneous combustion, the immediate occasion of which may be very slight, such as a candle or even a spark.

T. N. A.—Observation teaches that it is easy for man when left to his own imaginations and devices to degenerate into barbarism, but it is impossible for him to emerge from such a state without an impulse communicated to him from without. The theory of development from a low condition of intellect to a higher power of intelligence is not applicable to the human race. The history of the fall of man taught us in the nursery is a truth ever and anon experimentally felt by us as we pass through maturer years. To revert, however, to your question: Barbarism is not discoverable before the confusion of tongues, and is supposed to be a degeneracy produced in particular communities by that social convulsion. The restorative powers of Christianity have had a wonderful beneficial influence upon mankind at large.

ALBERT, twenty-two, 5ft. 9in., fair, curly hair, can play the piano, sing, and has good prospects. Respondent must be pretty, loving, amiable, and send her cards.

FLORENCE, eighteen, a brunette, pretty brown eyes, curly brown hair, and very cheerful. Respondent must be tall, dark, good looking, and about twenty-two.

THOUGHTFUL, twenty, dark, quiet, good teeth, and loving. Respondent must be rather dark, about twenty-five, and a good temper.

FREDERICK, as V. twenty, 5ft. 6in., dark, good looking. Respondent must be tall and dark, in the Army or Navy, and a resident in Liverpool or near.

I. O. N., medium height, good looking, black whiskers, and affectionate. Respondent should be middle-aged, with property.

ROBERT, twenty-two, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, cheerful, and domesticated. Respondent must be about twenty-seven, tall, and dark.

AMY, twenty-three, tall, fair, brown hair, blue eyes, good tempered, domesticated, and cheerful. Respondent must be tall and dark; a respectable tradesman preferred.

FLORENCE, twenty, black wavy hair, black eyes, loving and a good manager. Respondent must be tall, fair, good tempered, and a mechanic.

GERTRUDE, seventeen, tall, fair, loving, and a lady's maid. Respondent must be about twenty-four, tall, and dark.

ANNIE A., twenty-four, 5ft. 1in., hazel eyes, Grecian nose, and good tempered. Respondent should be a clerk.

FLORIST (a widower), fifty, 5ft. 6in., dark, and a country tradesman. Respondent must be between forty and fifty, amiable, domesticated, fond of country life, and possessed of a small property.

NELLY and CLARE—"Nelly," eighteen, tall, brown hair, blue eyes. "Clare," seventeen, dark hair, and gray eyes. Respondents must be mechanics, and possess honest hearts.

HAPPY-GO-LUCKY, twenty, 6ft. 2in., light hair and moustache, good looking, loving, fond of home and children, and has an income. Respondent must be nineteen, fair, good tempered, affectionate, and capable of making a good wife.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

C. E. G.'s wishes have been complied with. EVELYN is responded to by—"Alick D.," twenty-one, tall, fair, curly hair, amiable, affectionate, and a Scotchman.

VIOLET by—"S. A. J.," twenty-three, 5ft. 8in., dark curly hair, dark eyes, and good looking.

UNHAPPY by—"Ella G. J.," twenty-five, medium height, light complexion, gray eyes, fond of home and loving.

BESS JACKET by—"H. B.," twenty-two, tall, fair, pretty, cheerful, and good tempered.

COUGED BACK by—"Loving Lilly," twenty-one, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, merry, and domesticated.

YOUNG BILL by—"A Lover of the Sea," twenty, fair, passionately fond of music, and fond of home.

YOUNGER BILL by—"Annie L.," seventeen, fond of singing, loving, and good tempered.

SPARKER JACK by—"Little Typhoon," eighteen, fond of singing and home, and loving.

P. E. S. L. by—"N. C.," twenty-three, medium height, fair, and affectionate; would like to exchange cards.

LITTLE HURLEY by—"Dark-Eyed Nellie," nineteen, medium height, dark, pretty, able to wash a shirt, cook a dinner, and make a home happy; and—"Anne," nineteen, fair, and would make a good wife.

DUT by—"James," twenty-one, fair, fond of music and singing, good tempered, and fond of home. W. S. G. would like to hear more of "Dot," and would be glad if she would forward her cards.

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